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Tennessee State Public School Counselors' Time, Tasks and Knowledge

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To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a dissertation written by Laura Michelle Hebert entitled "Tennessee State Public School Counselors' Time, Tasks and Knowledge." I have examined the final electronic copy of this dissertation for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, with a major in Counselor Education.

R. F. Kronick, Major Professor

We have read this dissertation and recommend its acceptance:

P. Blanton, Julia A. Malia, R. B. Cunningham

Accepted for the Council:
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(Original signatures are on file with official student records.)

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Chairperson/Major Professor

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Original signatures are on file with official student records.

Tennessee State Public School

Counselors' Time, Tasks, and Knowledge

Dissertation

Submitted in partial fulfillment of Ph.D. in Counselor Education

Laura Michelle Hebert

May, 2007

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ABSTRACT

To prepare school counselors to work in the current school environment, school counselors, and counselor educators need to understand the challenges, the environment and the demands to be faced. The researcher initiated a research project called *Tennessee State Public School Counselors' Time, Tasks, and Knowledge*. The purpose of this study was to increase the understanding of public school counselors' time and tasks required and preferred, as well as specific knowledge the school counselors possess and need to learn to be competent as school counselors in the state of Tennessee.

The first objective of this research was to measure how Tennessee public school counselors actually spend their time and how they would prefer to spend their time in job-related activities. The *School Counselor Activity Rating Scale* (SCARS) instrument was used to complete this objective. The second objective of this research was to assess the areas of knowledge Tennessee public school counselors have and need to learn to complete their job-related activities and this was completed by a survey. Both the scale and the survey were e-mailed to the school counselors in the state of Tennessee.

Study results indicated that school counselors prefer to do more activities that are in alignment with American School Counselor Association's (2005) National Model for School Counseling Programs more than they actually are doing. Also, school counselors were found to be doing more non-guidance activities than they preferred to be doing. Results supported previous findings of researchers using the School Counselor Activity Rating Scale.

In assessing the areas of knowledge, findings revealed that Tennessee public school counselors described themselves as having a wide breadth of knowledge.

Knowledge levels differed by demographic location and ratio of students to school counselor. The results identified specific areas of knowledge that some school counselors stated they needed to successfully complete their roles and functions. Other school counselors indicated no need for knowledge in specific areas to successfully complete their roles and functions. Recommendations are provided for future research regarding school counselors in the state of Tennessee.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Over a century ago, counselors were introduced in the school systems to assist children in the schools become productive members of society. The guidance movement emerged from the Industrial Revolution and the Progressive Movement. Early counselors provided vocational/career counseling and instruction on moral development, interpersonal relationships, and the world of work (Schmidt, 1999, p.7).

Over time, school counselors expanded their role as they provided additional services including academic and educational counseling. Many school counselors have added leadership, advocacy, collaboration, systems change and social counseling (including character education) to their job responsibilities. The literature related to the field of school counseling is saturated with a multitude of definitions of the roles and functions of the school counselors and the role ambiguity that has surrounded this profession for decades (ASCA, 2005; Bemak, 1998, 2000; Education Trust, 2006; Gysbers & Henderson, 2001; 2002; Paisley & Hayes, 2003; Schmidt, Lanier, & Cope, 1999; Murray, 1995; Shaw, 1968; Studer & Anton, 1996).

In the last decade, the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) has provided a theoretical framework and model that has established the professional school counselor identity in the field of education. The ASCA National Model provides student competencies that define specific knowledge, skills and attitudes students should acquire through a comprehensive, developmental counseling program (American School Counselor Association [ASCA], 2005). Researchers and counselor educators have the

opportunity to increase the specificity of the knowledge school counselors need to perform the roles and functions necessary to help students.

As a school counselor, questions arise that include what the school counselors specifically need to do and know to improve the lives of all of the students at a school. “In today’s society, the school counselor can be the driving force behind the coordinated efforts of educational institutions, business, and industry in better preparing today’s youth for meeting the challenges of the global marketplace” (Staley & Carey, 1997, ¶ 20). School counselors seek new and current data that will improve their competency in working with students.

Statement of the Problem

Students have physical and mental energies. However, students need supports and systems to direct these energies. The school counselors can provide the supports and system to assist in creating a balance for the school system due to their training and education. School counselors can be part of a healthy system for a student to develop within.

The problem is that currently, school counselors are performing in a variety of roles that are not to the maximum benefit of the students and the school systems. These roles are not compatible with their education and training and as a result, students do not receive the maximum benefits from the school counselors.

The purpose of this research is to compare the differences of the school counselor’s preferred job-related roles and functions and actual job-related roles and functions. The second goal of this research study is to define the school counselors’

knowledge areas that they have, need to have and do not need to have in order to provide the best services to all the students within the school system.

As a counselor educator, the most important aspect is teaching school counselors to meet the needs of the students. However, there are other important parts of the school system that the school counselors must provide services for. In the school, the counselor must meet the needs of many individuals and systems including the students, the parents, the teachers, and community stakeholders. Therefore, the counselor educator must assist the school counselor within their educational training prepare for the multiple tasks required and needed of the school counselor within the school system.

"Just as school counselors must now alter how they function in the light of the changing needs of students and families, so too must counselor education programs" (Lockhart & Keys, 1998, ¶ 36). With respect to diversity within communities, counselor educators and school counselors must be aware of the needs of the schools in relation to location and developmental needs of all students. Needs may vary depending on the culture, location, resources, and developmental stages of the students. The needs of high school students in the inner city of Knoxville, Tennessee may be very different to high school students in the rural countryside of Newport, Tennessee.

The school counselors' roles and functions will continue to change and adapt according to the evolving needs of students, parents, teachers, and the community. Of concern is a failure to develop resources and services for human growth and development related to the needs of the students of today in specific communities. School counselors and counselor educators must be able to change, adapt, and grow in job roles, job tasks and knowledge as needed by our communities.

Entering into the 21st century, what are the students' needs now in the school? What issues must students face as they develop into healthy, functional, and happy adults? Students come to school with issues that affect their learning. While these students are in school, these issues must be addressed to enhance student growth and the learning process to the best possible degree for these students. Professional school counselors are a resource to accomplish these goals.

The data from this research study can provide insight into the roles and functions of the professional school counselors in Tennessee. Counselor educators and school counselors must be aware that there are different systems with different needs. School counselors must be flexible and open to learning. By increased awareness of the time, tasks, and knowledge necessary to be a highly functioning school counselor in Tennessee, counselor educators can incorporate this information into the training and education of the graduate students who desire to be school counselors in the state of Tennessee.

Counselor educators have the opportunity to be leaders in training flexible, knowledgeable school counselors. Counselor educators and school counselors must be aware of systemic phenomenon that affects the roles and functions of school counselors. The leader's capacity to recognize systemic phenomenon connected to the shifting balances in the processes of a relationship system is the key to the kingdom (Friedman, pp. 9 – 10, 1999).

Justification for Study

School counselors need a concrete identity to be an influential factor on the school systems. "Confusion and lack of clarity regarding the role and function of

counselors in schools has been highly visible and problematic in the educational field for years" (Lieberman, 2004, ¶ 5). Murray (1995) concluded that the role of the school counselor reflects a history of unclear definitions and confusion. School counselors need role definitions that the public school system is willing to integrate into the system.

The school counselor's role needs to be clarified and implemented appropriately. Many school counselors are over utilized, under appreciated and lacking in resources needed to fulfill the job responsibilities. Another troubling issue is the continued misuse of school counselors for non-counseling activities, sometimes identified as "clerk-work" (Bemak, 2000).

In this current research study, there is the opportunity to become aware of the school counselors' activities presently and preferred. Research is important in gaining awareness of the school counselors' roles. The optimum goal would be to understand how to gain a reduction in the differences between actual, preferred, expected, and needed roles of the school counselor.

It is a scientific opportunity for a researcher to undertake a study that will illuminate the activities and knowledge relating to a school counselor's role. The emphasis of this research study is defining the activities and the knowledge of the school counselors in Tennessee. Understanding the activities and knowledge areas of school counselors provides baseline data of where school counselors are at currently in job activities and knowledge and where they would prefer to be in job activities and knowledge. The school counselor sees every student in the school. It is the school counselor's role to promote the well being of all children at their school. The data can

provide an impetus essential for improving services to students and changing the roles and function of school counselors..

ASCA states that a comprehensive school counseling program will focus on what all students, from pre-kindergarten through 12th grade, should know, understand and be able to do in the academic, career, and personal/social domains (2005, p. 13). Every child in the public school system in the state of Tennessee has or should have some type of relationship with a school counselor. This relationship can be positive, negative or even nonexistent. It is important to understand the roles of this relationship, as the effects can be important for the development of healthy students. The goal is that all students have a positive and enriching experience with the school counselor.

The job duties of a school counselor vary from school to school, from county to county, and from region to region. This research study will examine what school counselors are doing with their time and what they prefer to be doing with their time in job related activities. The second research goal of this study is to survey school counselors to better understand what they need to know and do to serve the needs of their populations. This research study will provide information on the knowledge of the school counselors in the state of Tennessee. Knowledge level may vary depending on demographic factors. These factors include the age level at the school, the location of the school, the size of the school (ratio of students to school counselor), and the education and experience level of the school counselor.

"We have less and less resources, yet the schools expect us (the school counselors) to do more and more" (J. Ogle, personal communication, May 16, 2006). School counselors have too many job duties and a limited amount of time. The school

counselor must advocate for adequate resources to fulfill their role and functions. To implement a positive developmental guidance program may require not just a school counselor but may require a team.

In the ASCA National Model, Myrick stated, “History shows that unless the role of the school counselor is clearly established, the whims of the times can threaten the very existence of the counselor position” (2003, p.6). “The farther school counselors move from the mainstream of counseling and counseling associations, and the less they define themselves by their professional training and expertise, the more they will look and act like educators, administrators, and teachers, rather than counselors” (Webber & Mascari, 2006, ¶ 7).

Controversy over the professional identity of school counselors may seem to be contemporary because of the current literature addressing the school counselors’ roles and functions. However, the professional identity of school counselors has been a concern of scholars for many years. For example, the book *Function of Theory in Guidance Programs* written in 1968 had perspectives that are still written about in current literature. For example:

- …it would seem well to specify further those kinds of activities which are inappropriate to the functioning of a counselor within the present framework. Such functions would include substituting for absent teachers or administrators, registration of new students, and clerical work in general (Shaw, p. 59).

- Beck (1963) in listing “assumptions” includes, among others, the following one borrowed from Cribbin (1960): Guidance is student-centered, being concerned for the optimum development of the whole student and the fullest realization of his potential for individual and social ends (Shaw, p. 25),

- The influence of the family appears to be lessening, especially its role in the inculcation of positive values toward education, work, and democratic ideals. As this development has progressed, the public in general, including educators appears to have assumed that the school should take on the role of surrogate parents. Furthermore, there is some evidence to indicate that the school has done just this, so that, in addition to its traditional and perhaps too narrow role of transmitting knowledge, public education has now assumed a much broader responsibility. Thus, manners, morals, values, attitudes, mental health, driver education, vocational and educational direction, and many other functions previously considered matters of family responsibility are now in the purview of public education (Shaw, pp. 43-44).

Much of this responsibility falls on the shoulders of the school counselors. Often, school counselors want to complete all the goals and objectives of their roles yet find it impossible, especially with the large ratio of students in relation to the school counselors. Somewhere, the school counselors must cut corners therefore cutting out needed services of students. School counselors can become overwhelmed and disappointed in their performance because they cannot complete the roles and functions deemed necessary.

Fortunately, within the last decade, school counselors have established their role within the school community though not yet firmly. ASCA has shaped a theoretical foundation and created a national model for school counselors respected throughout the profession. ASCA has incorporated themes into the framework of The ASCA National Model including advocacy, collaboration and teaming, systemic change and leadership (2005). There are still issues concerning the school counselors' roles and functions. The roles and functions of school counselors framed by ASCA and the educational stakeholders, school systems, administrators within the school systems and school counselors each with their own vision of the school counselor's identity may define the roles and functions of school counselors differently.

Proceeding from the assumption that the characteristics of the ideal counselor must match the roles, responsibilities and identity of the counseling profession, a counselor becomes a school counselor because this person wants to assist students to reach their full potential through academic development, career development, and personal/social development. In order to keep up with the needs of the students, parents, schools, and communities, school counselors must shift from the role they have become comfortable in into a role of action. School personnel, parents, and students need to be aware of the role of the school counselor. Through research, data can be obtained to gain knowledge and go from there to make adjustments to obtain the ideal school counselor sand school counseling programs that benefit the school systems.

"There is no more critical indicator of the future of a society than the character, competence, and integrity of its youth" (Bronfenbrenner, McClelland, Wethington, Moen, and Ceci, 1996, p. 1). The primary goal of the school counselors' roles is to

benefit the youth in the process of cultivating character, competence and integrity. Public schools in the United States were created out of the conviction that education is not an individual issue but a public issue, one of deep importance for the cultivation of social order, civic liberty, and democratic vitality (Shirley, 1997, p. 4). “Many school systems continue to define the school counselor’s role and function through traditional guidance models despite the pressing mental health needs of students and families” (Lockhart & Keys, 1998, ¶ 29). Many administrators define the specific roles of school counselors in ways that may be inappropriate and a misuse of resources. Specific tasks and knowledge bases of school counselors need to be identified that unifies all stakeholders in the educational processes of the students.

Definition of School Counselors

According to the American School Counselor Association, today’s school counselors are essential members of the education team. School counselors “help all students in the areas of academic achievement, personal/social development and career development, assisting today’s students become the productive, well-adjusted adults of tomorrow” (ASCA, 2006, ¶ 4).

The Occupation Information Network (O*NET) has replaced the Dictionary of Occupational Titles. O*NET “serves as the nation's primary source of occupational information, providing comprehensive information on key attributes and characteristics of workers and occupations” (2007, ¶ 1). O*NET provides a wealth of knowledge concerning the school counselors’ tasks, knowledge, skills, abilities, work activities, work context, job zones, interests, work styles and values, wages and employment figures and related occupations. O*NET online provides information in detail with roles and

responsibilities required of school counselors. According to O*NET (2007, ¶ 5), school counselors' tasks include:

- Counsel students regarding educational issues such as course and program selection, class scheduling, school adjustment, truancy, study habits, and career planning.
- Counsel individuals to help them understand and overcome personal, social, or behavioral problems affecting their educational or vocational situations.
- Maintain accurate and complete student records as required by laws, district policies, and administrative regulations.
- Confer with parents or guardians, teachers, other counselors, and administrators to resolve students' behavioral, academic, and other problems.
- Provide crisis intervention to students when difficult situations occur at schools.
- Identify cases involving domestic abuse or other family problems affecting students' development.
- Meet with parents and guardians to discuss their children's progress, and to determine their priorities for their children and their resource needs.
- Prepare students for later educational experiences by encouraging them to explore learning opportunities and to persevere with challenging tasks.

- Encourage students and/or parents to seek additional assistance from mental health professionals when necessary.
- Observe and evaluate students' performance, behavior, social development, and physical health

According to ASCA, school counselors' main objective is to support the academic achievement of all students so they are prepared for the ever-changing world of the 21st century (ASCA, 2005, p. 8). Students come to school with a variety of issues that affect their learning opportunities. Therefore, the school counselor is the ideal person to help students enhance their academic performance. "School counselors impart specific skills and learning opportunities in a proactive, preventive manner, ensuring all students can achieve school success through academic, career and personal/social development experiences" (ASCA, 2005, p. 14). School counselors can also provide leadership, advocacy, collaboration and systemic change as part of the school counseling program. According to ASCA, the role of the school counselor is defined as:

> The professional school counselor is a certified/licensed educator trained in school counseling with unique qualifications and skills to address all students' academic, personal/social and career development needs. Professional school counselors implement a comprehensive school counseling program that promotes and enhances student achievement. Professional school counselors are employed in elementary, middle/junior high and high schools and in district supervisory, counselor education and post-secondary settings. Their work is differentiated by

attention to developmental stages of student growth, including the needs, tasks and student interests related to those stages.

Professional school counselors serve a vital role in maximizing student achievement. Incorporating leadership, advocacy and collaboration, professional school counselors promote equity and access to opportunities and rigorous educational experiences for all students. Professional school counselors support a safe learning environment and work to safeguard the human rights of all members of the school community. Collaborating with other stakeholders to promote student achievement, professional school counselors address the needs of all students through prevention and intervention programs that are a part of a comprehensive school counseling program. To achieve maximum program effectiveness, the American School Counselor Association recommends a counselor-to-student ratio of 1:250.

Professional school counselors have a master's degree or higher in school counseling or the substantial equivalent, meet the state certification/licensure standards and abide by the laws of the states in which they are employed. They uphold the ethical and professional standards of professional counseling associations and promote the development of the school counseling program based on the following areas of the ASCA National Model: foundation, delivery, management and accountability. (ASCA, 2004, ¶ 2-4).

According to the Tennessee Model for Comprehensive School Counseling from the Tennessee Department of Education (2005, p. 10), the roles and functions of the school counselors include:

- To counsel students individually and in small groups
- To present developmental lessons in the classroom and in small groups
- To serve as a student advocate
- To consult with teachers, administrators, school support personnel, parents and business/community agencies
- To participate in school meetings
- To work with parents in teaching effective parenting skills, creating a positive environment, and encouraging parent participation
- To provide staff development in identified areas of need and in orientation to the school counseling program
- To provide leadership in career development of all students
- To coordinate school activities pertaining to the school counseling program
- To facilitate the evaluation of the school counseling program

Research Questions

The first research question of this research project explored how Tennessee public school counselors actually spend their time in job related activities. The second research question of this research project investigated how Tennessee public school counselors prefer to spend their time in job related activities. The hypothesis was that there are

differences in how school counselors actually spend their time in job related tasks versus what school counselors would prefer to be doing in job related tasks.

The third question in this research study wanted to establish the levels of knowledge bases school counselors have, need to have, and do not need to have in order to complete their roles and functions. Demographic variables may influence knowledge levels and need for specific knowledge bases.

Sample Description

The participants were defined as school counselors employed by a public school in the state of Tennessee. The Counseling Director at the state department of Tennessee provided a list of e-mail addresses of school counselors in the state of Tennessee. The research survey was sent as an attachment to an e-mail. This e-mail was sent to all e-mail addresses on the list from the Tennessee state department.

Methodology

The research proposal *Tennessee State Public School Counselors' Time, Tasks, and Knowledge* was reviewed and granted approval under an Expedited review on August 22, 2006 by the Institutional Review Board at the University of Tennessee. The research study was implemented in October of 2006 after obtaining the most up-to-date e-mail list of school counselors employed in the state of Tennessee from the Tennessee Department of Education.

This research study contained two sections that were sent to the school counselors in Tennessee to complete. The first section of the research project to be completed by the school counselors was the School Counselor Activity Rating Scale (SCARS) instrument. SCARS was used to measure how Tennessee public school counselors actually spend

their time in job-related activities and how they would prefer to spend their time in job-related activities. SCARS was developed by Dr. J. L. Scarborough at the University of Massachusetts.

The second part of this research study was a knowledge survey developed by the principal investigator, Laura Hebert. The knowledge survey assessed the areas of knowledge that Tennessee public school counselors' have, need to have and do not need to have in a large variety of areas in order to complete the job roles and functions.

Data Gathering Procedure

E-mails were sent to all school counselors on the list of the state department of Tennessee. The e-mail included a survey that was created by a web survey tool called mrInterview, pronounced M-R-interview. The "M-R" stands for market research. The researcher designed the survey in a web browser, activated it, ran frequencies as it continued to collect data and then downloaded the data, all without any intervention.

The data in this research study was downloaded from the computer program SPSS Dimension Net into an SPSS file. The questions became variable labels and the responses became value labels. The data is stored on a secured computer with back up.

Limitations of the Study

Several potential limitations are important to think of when completing a research project. For this research study, one limitation of this study was access to school counselors in the state of Tennessee through Internet addresses. Not all school counselors are accessible through an e-mail address for various reasons. The sample for this research study consisted of school counselors that respond to e-mail and are willing to participate in research surveys. These school counselors may play a more active role in reference to

their professional identity. Another limitation to this study is that these results are limited to the geographical location of the state of Tennessee.

Ethical Considerations

Potential risks for participation in this research study were minimal. Withdrawal from the study could have happened at anytime before the submission of completed results. The school counselors' privacy and confidentiality will be protected. No individual results will be made available due to the need to protect the confidentiality of all participants. When the results of the research are published or discussed in conferences, no information will be included that would reveal anyone's identity that participated in the research study. School counselors that participated in the study are entitled to the aggregate results of the research.

Incentives were used. Respondents had the chance to win one of four gift certificates. Four gift certificates were randomly distributed to those who provided an e-mail address. After the drawing, all e-mail addresses were destroyed.

Summary

This research study will provide data that will be beneficial to the stakeholders in education including school counselors, counselor educators and most of all, the students. The data will provide specific information on the knowledge school counselors have, knowledge they need to know and what knowledge is not useful to complete job roles and functions. The data will provide specific information to the stakeholders regarding the activities school counselors actually are doing, what they prefer doing and the difference between reality and the ideal achievement of role activities.

Knowledge gained from this research study has the opportunity to improve the professional identity of school counselors in the state of Tennessee. The knowledge gained can also influence the perspectives of the stakeholders and increase their awareness of the roles and functions of the school counselors in the educational processes of the school systems

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Many scholarly perspectives are available in the literature regarding the roles and functions of school counselors. The review of literature expands a large time period and includes a variety of perspectives that are sometimes controversial compared to other perspectives. The school counselors' roles and functions have continuously changed over time. Many varied publications have written about the professional identity of the school counselor.

If the identity of the school counselor was not important, the literature regarding the roles and functions would be limited yet the literature is prolific in regards to the identity of the school counselors. In the literature, the roles and functions of school counselors are continually being redefined. "Historically, school counselors have struggled with a variety of role expectations and conflicting demands by stakeholders" (Webber & Mascari, 2006, ¶ 10).

The purpose of this chapter is to present literature that has had an impact on the school counselors' professional identity. First, a historical account is provided on how the school counseling professional identity has evolved over time. Second, a theoretical overview of the researcher's perspective regarding the role of school counselors is presented utilizing systems theory. Systems and systems' needs change and a paradigm shift is happening in regards to the definitions and perceptions of school counselors' roles and functions. Therefore, the roles and functions of school counselors are identified.

School counselors' effectiveness can be marginalized when there is controversy between how the school counselors view their roles and functions and how others view

their roles and functions. There are a variety of perspectives including principals, administration, students, teachers and parents that have influenced the identity of the school counselor. Therefore, literature regarding the perspectives of principals, teachers, parents, students, school counselors, and professional organizations regarding the roles and functions of school counselors are included. The review of literature provides information on how some of these stakeholders have integrated their perspectives.

Information regarding the knowledge bases and skills of school counselors is reviewed. Last, accountability and responsibilities of school counselors and stakeholders are examined. Overall, the review of literature accentuates the role ambiguity of school counselors.

History

"The history of school counseling has depicted a profession in search of an identity" (Dahir, 2004, p. 345). The history of the school counseling profession in the United States began just over a hundred years ago. During the Industrial Revolution, guidance emerged at the height of the Progressive Movement that sought to change the negative social conditions associated with the Industrial Revolution. This period was an amazing time of growth in America.

The early stages of guidance can be traced to the work of a number of persons that were influential in creating and implementing early ideas of guidance. These included Frank Parsons, Jessie B. Davis, Meyer Bloomfield, Anna Reed, E. W. Weaver, and David Hill, who worked through a number of organizations and movements such as the settlement house movement, the National Society for the Promotion of Industrial Education (NSPIE), and schools in Grand Rapids, Seattle, New York, and New Orleans

(Gysbers & Henderson, 2000, p. 3). Early developments in the guidance movement were accompanied by the formation of the National Vocational Guidance Association (NVGA) in 1913 (Schmidt, 1999, p. 8). This organization evolved into the American Counseling Association by 1992.

Jesse B. Davis worked at a high school in Detroit, Michigan from 1898 to 1907 as a guidance counselor providing educational and vocational counseling. In 1907, Davis became a principal and implemented a school-wide counseling program which helped initiate the vocational guidance movement in the United States. Frank Parsons is often recognized as the person who started the guidance movement in the United States with vocational guidance (Schmidt, 1999). In 1908, Parsons organized the Boston Vocational Bureau that was established by Mrs. Quincy Agassiz Shaw. The objective was to provide vocational guidance to young people. Parson's concentration on vocational development was outlined by his concern about society's failure to increase resources and services for human growth and development (Schmidt, 1999, p. 8).

Events and policies have also had an effect on the growth and direction of the school counseling profession, the school counselors' role and the history of school counseling. School counseling grew during the 1920s and the 1930s because of the rise of progressive education in schools.

The identity of the school counselor continued to develop through the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s. During the 1940s, the United States used psychologists and counselors to select, recruit, and train military personnel. In the 1950s, the government established the Guidance and Personnel Services Section in the Division of State and Local School Systems. In 1952, the American Personnel and Guidance Association and the American

School Counselor Association (ASCA) were created. In 1953, the American School Counselor Association joined the American Personnel and Guidance Association. Then, in 1954, ASCA published *The School Counselor* which was the first journal dedicated exclusively to the school counseling profession. In 1958, the National Defense Education Act (NDEA) passed. This act provided funding for expanding school testing programs and for training institutes for school counselors, both novice and experienced (Poppen & Thompson, 1974). In 1964, the NDEA was amended to provide funds for enhancing elementary school guidance.

1970 began a time period of funding for elementary school guidance and counseling programs because of Title III of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. Congress passed Public Law 94-142 (Education of All Handicapped Children Act) in 1975. Public Law 94-142 is now codified as IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act). In order to receive federal funds, states must develop and implement policies that assure a free appropriate public education (FAPE) to all children with disabilities.

In 1981, the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) was formally established by the American Counseling Association (ACA). CACREP is an independent agency and grants accreditation for graduate level counseling programs that have significantly met and gone beyond the CACREP standards set by and for the profession. CACREP came out of the work of the Association of Counselor Education and Supervision and the American School Counselor Association.

In the 1990s, the role of the school counselor began to change again. In 1990, the Education Trust was established to persuade colleges and universities to support K-12

reform efforts. “In 1994, the passage of the School to Work Opportunities Act (STWOA) signaled the beginning of a new role for schools and school counselors in assisting students with the transition from school into the workplace” (Granello, 1999, ¶ 1).

In 1997, two important things happened. First, ASCA proposed “The National Standards for School Counseling Program.” Second, the Dewitt Wallace-Reader’s Digest Fund provided the Education Trust with funding for an initiative regarding the transformation of school counseling. The Education Trust became very influential by the late 1990s in contributing to the debate regarding the clarification and advancement of the role of professional school counselors within school systems.

The 21st century has seen new advancements in the professional identity of school counselors. In February of 2002, the National School Counselor Training Initiative (NSCTI) was implemented. The MetLife Foundation funded the Education Trust with this initiative for national school counselor training. NCSTI provides professional development training for practicing school counselors.

Currently, the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) has provided updated standards for the preparation of all school counselors. The CACREP curriculum is used as the foundation for the educational requirements of most state licensing regulations. CACREP’s goal is for school counseling students to demonstrate the professional knowledge and skills that are necessary to promote the academic, career and personal/social development of all pre-kindergarten through 12th grade students.

The Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs has a draft available on the Internet of the revisions of the standards of 2008 that will

require students to have demonstrated standards of knowledge and skills of students in school counseling programs. These future standards of CACREP may include foundations in school counseling, counseling (prevention and interventions), diversity and advocacy, assessment, research and evaluation, academic development, collaboration and consultation, and leadership (2007).

In 2005, ASCA presented the second edition of a National Model for school counseling programs. In just over 100 years, the school counselor has established a firm, respected, needed identity within the educational setting. “The profession of school counseling is now firmly established with a professional organization celebrating its 50th anniversary, an ethical code, training standards, a recognized body of knowledge, and a credentialing process” (Bauman, Siegel, Falco, Szymanski, Davis, and Seabolt, 2003, ¶ 36). In January of 2006, Congress officially declared February 6-10 as National School Counseling Week.

The roles and activities of school counselors have now been identified. Many theoretical models have influenced the identity of school counselors. “Historically, the activities of a school counselor have been influenced by the prevailing models of counseling” (Pfaller & Kiselica, 1996, ¶ 1). Now, many school counselors support comprehensive developmental models, which emphasize healthy development in many areas of life. Many school counselors now integrate an eclectic approach, assimilating ideas from different theoretical perspectives to use with specific students and settings (Baker, 1992).

Now the time has come to move forward from identity formation to identity action. The focus has shifted to models of comprehensive school counseling programs

that desire an understanding of how students are different because of what school counselors do. In order to understand how students are different, research must also look at what school counselors are accomplishing that supports student growth.

What school counselors are doing in the schools is a needed service. The school counselors' occupational status as a career option shows a favorable job market. Overall employment for counselors is faster than average, and school counselors should find a encouraging job market because demand is higher than the graduation rates of school counseling programs as shown in Table 1 (Tables appear in Appendix G). Job openings should increase over the next ten years (Table 1). Nationally, trends and growth in the job market for school counselors are positive. Table 2 provides information on wages nationally and in Tennessee for school counselors. Wages of school counselors in metropolitan areas of Tennessee are provided in Table 3.

"Research on school counselor's career satisfaction has been limited" (Baggerly & Osborn, 2006, ¶ 3). In a study by Baggerly and Osborn (2006), an analyses of Florida school counselors' survey responses showed that positive predictors of career satisfaction included appropriate duties, high self-efficacy, and district and peer supervision, while negative predictors were inappropriate duties and stress. Also, high stress levels of school counselors have been attributed to a lack of clearly defined roles and duties resembling administrative tasks (Studer & Anton, 1996).

Theoretical Explanations

Overview. Theoretical frameworks provide us with perspectives on how to view the interacting individual. By using more than one theoretical framework, scholars and practitioners may gain a fuller understanding of an individual and the interacting systems

because people today are more diversified. Perceptions and meanings have become critical variables in understanding people and their behaviors.

The researcher's perspective on how to view the school counselor is from the constructivist paradigm. The ontology of the constructivist paradigm is that the nature of reality is subjective and multiple realities exist. People construct knowledge for themselves. Social systems and the people within these systems construct meaning as he or she learns and experiences life. The school counselor's roles are very diverse and so are the perspectives. In this research study, the responses are subjective and provide a variety of information about the school counselors on a variety of different variables.

The researcher's perspective on how to view the school counselor follows the wellness model. Counselors share the belief that the wellness model of mental health is the best perspective for helping people resolve their personal and emotional issues and problems (Remley & Herlihy, 2005, p. 23). Theoretical models provide a fundamental perspective and understanding of how school counselors' roles and functions are identified and explained.

The wellness model, systems theory, role theory and attachment theory are placed in the forefront of the perspectives of the school counselor in this research study. School counselors operating from the wellness model must take into account systems theory, role theory, and attachment theory as they affect the well being of the students. School counselors must view the students, parents, teachers, administrators and stakeholders as part of a system in which all have defined roles. All of the roles are attached to each other creating systems.

Theoretical models must take into account whom services are to reach, when services should be rendered, and how services should be rendered. ASCA has been developing and implementing a theoretical model for school counselors. ASCA's theoretical model serves as a catalyst of change, empowering and uniting school counselors as they fulfill their mission of preparing students to live and work in the 21st century. The Tennessee Comprehensive School Counseling Model is based on the ASCA model. According to ASCA's National Model and Tennessee's Model for Comprehensive School Counseling, school counselors are expected to meet the needs of all of the students in three basic domains: academic development, career development, and personal/social development (2005). Services are provided throughout the students' education from kindergarten through graduation. The main focus is on the developmental stages of growth.

According to the ASCA National Model (2005) and the Tennessee's Model for Comprehensive School Counseling Model (2005), a school counseling program is comprehensive in scope, preventative in design and developmental in nature, designed to ensure that all students receive program benefits. The state and the national school counseling models are student-centered and provide a base from which counselor educators can teach school counselors the roles and responsibilities expected of them. The models define the roles and functions of school counselors, and create a tool for program implementation, management and evaluation. The models also provide opportunities to serve all students and define responsibilities and activities for achieving students' competencies.

Wellness model. Integrating the school counseling models with the wellness model is appropriate action for the school counselor to implement. The mission statement of many schools is for all students to be successful. Operating from the wellness model provides an opportunity for student success on many levels. What is the role of the counselor within the school system? School counselors must have a variety of skills and resources to assist the widely diverse populations they serve. School counselors deal with diverse issues of multiple populations at the different life stages. The school counselor's purpose is to provide and support the delivery of specific skills and information through a school counseling program in a proactive, preventive manner to ensure that all students have the opportunity to achieve school success. "The goal of counseling in the wellness model is to help the person accomplish wellness, rather than cure an illness" (Remley & Herlihy, 2005, p. 25).

In essence, the main goal of the school counselor seems to be to connect parents and educators within a community in order to enhance the well-being of all of the students. School counselors must utilize all of the systems surrounding the student to effectively support and enhance the well-being of their future. According to the Surgeon General (2000), "the behaviors of mentally healthy children include their functioning well at home, in school, and in their communities."

The wellness model is an adopted perspective of counselors that all people can achieve positive mental health to their own best possible extent. The wellness model operates on a continuum from severe dysfunction to a fully functioning mentally healthy person who could be considered self-actualized (Remley & Herlihy, 2005). Counselors can evaluate a person's well being related to living on a number of scales including

relationships (family, friends, work, and community), sexuality, spirituality, career, extracurricular activities, environment, economic situation, and physical health. Counselors can assess the various areas and assist the person to become the most successful he or she can be. Some factors of the scales have to be taken into account as more difficult to change or cannot be changed. For example, one might have limited ability to change his/her economic status. Also, one cannot change his/her physical handicap, physical limitations, or IQ but can learn what can be done within these domains to feel successful. The wellness model gives school counselors the opportunity to increase a student's self-awareness of the areas he/she can improve to better him/herself. The wellness model is action oriented helping the student become aware of and make choices toward a more successful life. The student takes a primary role in his or her well-being in this model.

This primary role changes developmentally as the students grow and become more responsible or are expected to be more responsible. The wellness model looks at each developmental stage of the person. People have to deal with different issues developmentally throughout their lifespan. A school counselor looks at children developmentally as well. The Tennessee School Counseling Framework requires counselors to assist/educate students with different developmental issues (academic, educational, and personal/social development) depending on their age and grade. ASCA's National Model and the Tennessee School Counseling Framework are counseling models that are comprehensive and developmental in scope.

At the elementary grade levels, a school counselor may want to teach the students how to share and play cooperatively. At the middle school level, a school counselor

might want to teach students how to resolve conflict. At the high school level, a school counselor might want to teach students to respect values and rights of people of different backgrounds. However, these issues may abound at any age level and therefore school counselors must provide a comprehensive approach at all age levels.

School counselors may need to assess a student's individual wellness on different scales and consider the issue in relation to the developmental stage of the student. A school counselor would not consider a Kindergarten student's sexuality or spirituality the same way as a middle school student or the same way as a high school senior. Career counseling would be different for different age groups. For example, for first and second graders, the school counselor might want students to learn about different kinds of jobs. In middle school, the school counselor might want to begin with an assessment of career interests and job shadowing. A school counselor of young adults might assist students with job opportunities, financial assistance for college and college tours.

One goal for counselors in the wellness model is to prevent problems before they become problems. For example, a school counselor may have a program to lead with K-second grade students (age 6-8) on good touch, bad touch. A school counselor may have to teach the students behaviors so that no one inappropriately touches their body. According to one research study, 1 out of 4 girls and 1 out of 7 boys will be sexually abused before the age of 18 (Finkelhor, 1994). It is much easier to teach students awareness and strategies to avoid bad touches than to counsel a child who has been molested. Students are best served by having the skills to deal with life's multiple good and bad experiences than to feel like failures because they did not know how to deal with life's many stressors. Another way to prevent problems is to teach students life skills

before he/she needs them. In Latin it is “Praemonitus praemunitus” or in English it is “Forewarned is forearmed” (Wikipedia, 2006, ¶ 2).

Early intervention means that the issue was not prevented but early interaction can prevent an issue from becoming deeply ingrained as part of the individuals’ repertoire or escalating into a more serious issue/problem. For example, a school counselor would have a much easier time working with a child with anger management issues and teaching the person coping skills and anger management tools, rather than have society deal with the issue once the person is an adult and has beaten his/her children. Another example would be working with a mother who is beginning to show signs of post-partum depression rather than wait and work with her after she has killed her children.

By empowering the student, the school counselor assists people in gaining skills to be in control of their lives. People can increase self-awareness and learn that they have choices in life and are responsible for their self and their actions. People can learn to problem-solve and use these skills when new and/or difficult situations arise in their lives. Through his/her development, people can be empowered, develop character and autonomy, and become productive members of our society.

Systems theory. Researchers, counselor educators and school counselors must be leaders in recognizing systemic phenomenon and how the effects of their roles and relationships are contributing to the educational school system. This research study will provide knowledge of the school counselors’ roles and functions that are part of systemic phenomenon.

School counselors have many roles in the school system and must learn to act in concert with fellow educators in order to safeguard their professional identity. Although a

school counselor is an individual, the context of his/her actions of his/her job is an interaction with other individuals or groups. A systems paradigm is an effective strategy for understanding the relationships and roles within the school system. Friedman states that “a leader’s capacity to recognize systemic phenomena connected to the shifting balances in the processes of a relationship system is the key to the kingdom” (pp. 9 – 10, 1999).

Systems theory is the theoretical framework utilized as the core of this research study. The characteristics of systems theory include understanding the environment, the role or function of each element in the system and the interactions between the elements. Students, teachers, principals, school counselors, parents, and stakeholders are the core elements within the environment of a school. As a system, all actions and communications must be taken into account and the contributions of these actions impact on the system. Systems theory provides a model to better understand the systems of the school (teachers, school counselors, principal, staff, etc.), family and child and their interactions. The actions of one system are seen as affecting and being affected by the actions of the other system. The school, family, and student together create a system within systems.

The school is a unique, living system that has the opportunity to thrive and grow or stagnate. The school is a system within other systems and this creates a complex system involving several interactive components. These include a multitude of roles, rules, responsibilities and boundaries. Analyzing and understanding the system, the interactions and the components can facilitate improvement and growth. Talcott Parsons, a sociologist, would describe the school system as "the action system," consisting of

interconnected behaviors of human beings (students, teachers, parents, administrators, school counselors, stakeholders) set in a physical environment (the school).

Parsons formulated a sociological paradigm called the “AGIL scheme" or "AGIL paradigm" to analyze the (action) system and its subsystems. In order for a system to survive and maintain equilibrium, the system’s functional imperatives include (A) adaptation, (G) attain goals, (I) integrate components, and (L) latent pattern maintenance, an institutionalized culture of some nature (Kim, 2003).

Role relationships are developed in a system and become institutionalized. School counselors’ identities are institutionalized within the school systems and are grounded in a set of expectations that are culture/system specific. According to Parsons, "institutionalization is an articulation or integration of the actions of a plurality of actors in a specific type of situation in which the various actors accept jointly a set of harmonious rules regarding goals and procedures" (Mayhew, 1983, p. 118). School counselors’ roles within the system are neither harmonious nor explicit.

The school system must contain a distribution process by which the question of who is to get what, who is to do what, and the manner and conditions under which it is to be done is made explicit. If this is not done, the social system will fail and will make way for another system. If it does occur, integration will be accomplished. The task of allocating roles, facilities, and rewards, therefore, must be established within the school system and access to roles must be determined by qualifications (Talcott Parsons, 2007). Continued existence can be establishing by an identity with specific roles and functions.

The school counselors’ roles and functions are not always clearly defined and established. To survive, the school counselors and their roles have changed and adapted

to find their fit within the education systems. Sometimes school counselors are misused. Sometimes it seems as if the school counselor is the stepchild within the system. At other times, the school counselor adds positively and enhances the education system.

The school system continually faces a multitude of different obstacles and opportunities over time. Using systems theory, one can understand the complexities of the roles; responsibilities of the system and the subsystems involved and hopefully use the knowledge to support the system positively. “School counselors work from a holistic, systemic approach in which they attempt to understand and assist the whole child in relationship to classroom, home and other environments” (White & Mullis, 1999, p. 242).

When working with a system, the focus is on the interaction of each subsystem rather than on the subsystem itself. The school, the personnel, the parents, and students together create subsystems within systems. By using systems theory, the subsystems of the system can be defined as well as the systems’ boundaries. The characteristics of systems theory include understanding the environment, the role or function of each subsystem or element in the system and the interactions between the subsystems and elements (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). As a system, all actions and communications must be taken into account along with the contributions of these actions to the system.

The theoretical work of Bronfenbrenner’s theory and research are excellent ways to better understand the complexity of the various systems. Bronfenbrenner’s interest in the interactions between the developing child and the environment led him to develop his social ecology of human development in which development takes place within systems (Russo, 2000, ¶3). “A microsystem is a pattern of activities, roles, and interpersonal relations experienced by the developing person in a given setting with particular physical

and material characteristics" (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p. 22). The microsystem could be defined as the school.

The system of school, family, and child are similar to the "mesosystem" in his model of the ecological environment using interconnecting systems. Bronfenbrenner defines a mesosystem as comprising "the interrelations among two or more settings in which the developing person actively participates (such as, for a child, the relations among home, school, and neighborhood peer group; for an adult, among family, work, and social life)…" (1979, p. 25). The exosystem refers to "one or more settings that do not involve the developing person as an active participant, but in which events occur that affect, or are affected by, what happens in the setting containing the developing person" (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p. 25). These settings influence the development of the individual (ex. parental workplace, school board meeting). The macrosystem refers to "consistencies, in the form and content of lower-order systems (micro-, meso-, and exo-) that exist, or could exist, at the level of the subculture or the culture as a whole, along with any belief systems or ideology underlying such consistencies" (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p. 26). Understanding the different systems by boundaries, functions, effects, roles and rules allows the school counselor more opportunity to create systemic change, coordinate and collaborate with the multiple systems and increase systems' resources and capital.

All systems contain rules, roles and norms that effect development. For the most positive development of the individual to occur, the various systems must work together. Dysfunctional systems occur due to blurred lines of boundaries and roles. Boundaries and roles need to be established because the responsibilities can overlap.

The U.S. Public Health Service put out the *Report of the Surgeon General's Conference on Children's Mental Health: A National Action Agenda.* In the document, it was reported “mental health is a critical component of children's learning and general health and therefore, fostering social and emotional health in children as a part of healthy child development must therefore be a national priority” (2000, ¶ 16). The report provides goals and action steps to promote mental health in children. Within these action steps, there is a need to understand systems and the expected role school counselors could have. For example, the third goal of U.S. Public Health Service report is to improve the assessment of and recognition of mental health needs in children and includes the following action step (2000, ¶ 46):

ACTION STEPS

- Encourage early identification of mental health needs in existing preschool, childcare, education, health, welfare, juvenile justice, and substance abuse treatment systems.
- Create tangible tools for practitioners in these systems to help them assess children's social and emotional needs, discuss mental health issues with parents or caregivers and children, and make appropriate referrals for further assessments or interventions.
- Train all primary healthcare providers and educational personnel in ways to enhance child mental health and recognize early indicators of mental health problems in children with special healthcare needs, children of

fragmented families, and children of parents with mental health and/or substance abuse disorders.

- Promote cost-effective, proactive systems of behavior support at the school level. These systems of behavior support should emphasize universal, primary prevention methods that recognize the unique differences of all children and youth, but should include selective individual student supports for those who have more intense and long-term needs.
- Increase provider understanding of children's mental healthcare needs and provide training to address the various mental health issues among children with special healthcare needs and their families.
- Increase the understanding of practitioners, policymakers, and the public of the role that untreated mental health problems play in placing children and youth at risk for entering the juvenile justice system.

In a shift to viewing the school, family and student within the community as a system, all must adapt and collaborate to create a positive balanced system. In a system, power may shift and change because everyone in the system needs to work together. Another perspective to systems theory is the joint systems approach in which the child is part of a family system and is also part of the school system. The joint systems approach applies general systems theory to family and school functioning, with particular reference to the interaction between them when problems of an educational nature arise with children (Dowling, 1994, p. 1). The interactions determine the structure and organization

of the systems and in turn the systems are influenced by the structure and organization of the interactions. The joint systems approach permits school counselors to utilize a systems-based framework to identify critical system components that effect the positive development of the student.

The school counselors' role is to assist in creating a balanced system and balanced subsystems within the school. Some stakeholders may not want the power or may not want to give the power up. The ways individuals deal with changes will cause an effect on the system. Gaining support for changes within the school systems is not always easy and requires demonstrating a program's importance to the system and, in particular, to key or influential people (Napierkowski & Parsons, 1995). If the individuals or systems perceive the program and interactions as part of a positively evolving system, positive effects will flow throughout the systems. Research has suggested that focusing on data and system change is not shared by the majority of school counselors and principals (Perusse, Goodnough, Donnegan, & Jones, 2004).

People like stability. Change creates knowledge of new solutions and also creates new problems. The outcome from this research study of the school counselors preferred and actual activities could possibly create theory of social structure, theory of social change, and significant data that is enhancing or deterring the school counseling programs of the school systems.

Systems theory can provide insight on external stressors that affect the school counselor. The school should be viewed as a system when trying to understand the processes of stressors on the school and the individual members. ASCA is part of the macrosystem determining the specific properties of school guidance program.

There are a variety of systemic models that can provide an overview of the school system. Systems are complex patterns of roles, rules and boundaries and interactions. As a school system develops, specialized roles develop and should be valued. School systems are highly structured and maintained through interplay of cultural, personality and situational factors in an interactional framework. Within this framework, the school counselors can be leading figures and authorities on systemic change and development within the school. School counselors can utilize system theory to effectively understand and utilize the systems within the system. The school counselor can create systemic change. Systemic change is part of the current models of school counseling (ASCA, 2005; Tennessee Department of Education, 2005). School counselors can assess systemic barriers to academic success. School counselors can open the systems up for communication and networking to achieve academic success. Utilizing a systems model allows school counselors the opportunity to investigate all possibilities.

Imagine. A description of the school system could be looked at like a car. The road signs are like the policies, rules and cultures. The principals are the axles of the car: The driving forces to get those tires going. The communities and school are the tires. There are many different varieties and values related to tires. The community could be wealthy like a good, steel, reinforced tire with a warranty or the community could be poor, measly thin retread with embedded nails. Many analogies can be created from this comparison.

School counselors, teachers, and parents are the spokes on the wheel. The spokes give the tire the support. Counselor educators assist in creating the rims of these spokes.

The load should be distributed evenly across all of the spokes or the tire may be damaged. The school is the hub of the tire and the hub of activity.

The students are the lug nuts connecting the hub to the axle. Sometimes the lug nuts are misaligned or missing threads for correct alignment. Sometimes a lug nut may even fall off. The car may stop and pick up the lug nut and put it back on or just keep riding. Another car will probably run over that lug nut.

All parts of a car must function in order for the car/system to go forward. However the role of the school counselor is changing. The school counselor is becoming the rim instead of a spoke. Counselor educators are creating the entire rim (bigger job than before). The rim is a major support between the tire and the spokes. The rim requires strength and balance. All in all, the parts of the school system, while performing different functions, work together to maintain the stability of the whole school system.

A system can only function as a whole by virtue of the interdependence of its parts. As in Gestalt theory, the whole is greater than the sum of the parts. “The main advantage of the systems approach as a scientific method is that it allows the integration holistic and reductionistic principles, leading to models in which both "the whole is more than the sum of the parts" and "you must understand the behavior of the parts in order to understand the emergence of the whole" applies” (Heylighen, 1992, ¶ 5).

Role theory. The dynamics of the school system is basically the dynamics of the roles within the systems. Roles support and define school systems. School systems support and define the roles within also. Within a school system, there is a priori

knowledge of role requirements of educators, administrators, parents, students and school counselors.

System growth is role related. School counselors must grow and manage a variety of functions as part of their role. Paisley and McMahon (2001) indicated that the most important challenge for school counselors concerns the ongoing controversy over role definition. The school counselor must be a consultant, collaborator, an advocate, a leader, a mediator, a coordinator, an educator, and a counselor. Their role in the school is very important and can be a pivotal point in the development of healthy students.

Role theory bridges individual behavior and social structure. Role theory provides an understanding of roles in relationships and within systems. Human behavior and roles are guided and are predictive by expectations held both by the individual and by other people. Role theory bridges individual behavior and social systems. The role is the essential starting point for individual interaction (2 or more people) which occurs in such a way as to compose an interdependent system. The school system can be viewed as an interdependent system; a group with certain roles and boundaries exclusive to their members (Talcott Parsons, 2007). In a healthy system, roles are flexible. Self-serving roles are negative because they are counterproductive for the system.

"Others writers and researchers confirm the lack of clarity and report that recognition of counseling as a profession is hampered by role confusion (Poidevant, 1991), role conflict (Coll & Friedman, 1997; Coll & Rice, 1993; Van Sell, et al. 1981.), and by the inability of the profession to maintain a consistent role (Coll & Friedman, 1997)" (Lieberman, 2004, ¶ 5). "Role conflict and role ambiguity are two specific

occupational stressors that school counselors experience with regard to the multiple roles they assume within schools" (Butler & Constantine, 2005, ¶ 6).

Role conflict occurs as the result of incompatible roles. Role conflict occurs when there is disparity between what an individual wants to do and needs to do and what an individual is expected to do. For example, for school counselors, the role of disciplinarian conflicts with being a student advocate. Role conflict may arise when two or more concurrent and incompatible expectations exist in a way that conformity with a given role compromises fulfilling other roles (Butler & Constantine, 2005, ¶ 6). This can be even more problematic when the expectations are different. Administrators, policy makers, stakeholders, parents, teachers, students, and school counselors have different (and similar) expectations and perceptions of a school counselor and his/her role. Role conflict includes competing or inconsistent role assignments.

Role confusion takes place when a person has a problem determining the role to assume. School counselors' role confusion is not new; rather, it has been a chronic and unresolved issue since the early 1950s (Aubrey, 1973, 1977; Fitch, Newby, Ballestero, & Marshall, 2001; Lieberman, 2004; Shaw, 1968, Schmidt, 1999). Culbreth, Scarborough, Solomon, and Banks-Johnston (2001) found that elementary school counselors reported lower levels of role conflict and ambiguity than did their counterparts in middle and high schools. Findings from one study (Monteiro-Leitner, Asner-Self, Milde, Leitner, and Skelton, 2006, ¶ 27) suggested some of the reasons for role confusion include:

a) All key players do not know what a school counselor's role is, and when they do, they do not always agree on that role;

b) The power differentials inherent in the relationships among key players make it difficult for the school counselor's role to become institutionalized; and

c) Economic regional, local, and student needs play a significant part in altering the daily functioning of an individual professional school counselor's duties.

The goal of school counselors is to achieve role embracement. Complete acceptance of his/her multiple roles and functions improves their job success and satisfaction. One study on female school counselors found that multiple role balance and job satisfaction were both positively predictive of overall life satisfaction (Bryant & Constantine, 2006). Role confusion can impinge job satisfaction and the school counselors' ability to function on the job.

Role stress can occur when a school counselor is assigned a role for which they are inadequately prepared. The role of the school counselor is still under the rule of the administrators and the school system. With the development and implementation of state and national comprehensive school counseling programs, the school counselor's role is becoming more clearly defined and more respected. The school counselor may still suffer role ambiguity and stress when entering a school system. The school counselor may have learned a specific way of behaving which applies to some school systems, but finds the rules and needs in the current school system are different. With appropriate training from counselor educators, school counselors can become professionally more flexible to adapt to the needs of the community and the unique student populations within a school system.

Attachment theory. School counselors look at all of the needs of the students. This may include clothing, food, safety needs, home issues, etc. Students cannot learn if their basic needs are not met. Abraham Maslow created a hierarchy of needs that includes physiological needs, safety needs, belonging needs, esteem needs, and the needs to actualize self, in that order (1943). Students must have met their physiological needs before they can meet their safety needs. Once one level of needs is met, a student can move on to the next level. The school system and the school counselor have the opportunity to fulfill these students' needs in order to achieve student success. For example, breakfast and lunch can be provided, clothes can be provided, resources for shelter can be provided, safety can be provided. When these needs are largely taken care of, then the need for belonging comes into play.

The school systems and school counselors can create an environment within the system that promotes a sense of belonging. Attachment is a vital process in human development, not only because it is related to individual survival but because it promotes adaptive development during the entire life cycle (Ainsworth, 1989). The establishment of an attachment relation is perceived as a social-emotional task of infancy that provides the foundation for competence and self-efficacy, and prepares the child for the resolution of ensuing developmental tasks in the social-emotional and cognitive domains (Cicchetti, Cummings, Greenberg, & Marvin, 1990; Matas, Arend, & Sroufe, 1978; Suess, Grossmann, & Sroufe, 1992; Thompson, 1999). School counselors can be the attachment figure within the school system for the students. Attachment provides a sense of belonging. Attachment theory is one theoretical foundation for school counseling and provides credibility to the myriad of functions of school counselors. "Many of the current

roles of a school counselor can be described from an attachment theory framework and attachment theory provides justification for ways in which school counselor roles can be modified in the future" (Pfaller & Kiselica, 1996, ¶ 2).

The concepts of attachment theory can be applied to multiple interventions used by school counselors. School counselors can systemically infuse attachment theory into the existing professional domains of school counseling including assessment, counseling, consultations, referrals, and pedagogical services. Within the counseling domain, counselors may serve as a secure base (Pistole, 1989), or a surrogate attachment figure (Ainsworth, 1989). In the pedagogical services domain, the school counselor can introduce a variety of ideas from attachment theory in a workshop for parents to explain the a range of behaviors of children, the meaning of secure and insecurely attached, and the types of interactions that may assist to change their behavior patterns (Pfaller & Kiselica, 1996, ¶ 31). School counselors provide students with positive regard and therefore can be a base of support for all of the students.

Roles and Functions of School Counselors

The role of school counselors is continually being redefined. "Historically, school counselors have struggled with a variety of role expectations and conflicting demands by stakeholders" (Webber & Mascari, 2006, ¶ 10). Within the academic field, the roles and functions of school counselors have been examined and defined by numerous scholars (Akos & Trier, 2004; Carroll, 1993; Dahir, 2004; Helms & Ibrahim, 1983, 1985; Kaffenberger, Murphy, and Bemak, 2006; Scarborough, 2005; Shertzer & Stone, 1963; Stanciak, 1995; Studer, 2004; Wrenn, 1957).

The school counselors' effectiveness can be marginalized when there is controversy between how the school counselors view their roles and functions and how others view their roles and functions. A paradigm shift is needed in the definition and perception of the school counselors' roles and functions because systems and systems' needs change. School counselors need distinct job descriptions and role statements that are supported by school systems, professional associations, counselor training, and local, state, and national policies. Professional identity is defined by school counselors' roles and functions. School counselors are at a level of professional expertise that enables them to go into a system and provide specific roles and functions.,

Stakeholders must be aware of the specifics of school counselors' roles and functions. As of now, stakeholders have a variety of ambiguous perceptions of school counselors. School counselors can help the stakeholders within the school system understand the roles and functions of the school counselors, the multiple levels of interactions that take place in the school system, and the surrounding systems in the communities.

The school counseling profession is evolving, changing and adapting. A great deal of the literature conveys information about the roles of school counselors actively changing. Words related to the role of the school counselor throughout the literature include: call to action, advocacy, accountability, balancing, transforming, developing, changing, coordinating, leading, planning, implementing, evaluating, collaborating, connecting, reforming, counseling, consulting, and teaching. These are all words of action. The role of the school counselor is not stagnant but actively evolving to improve its identity and functions.

The school counselor's role can be based on the needs of the school system but more importantly, the school counselors' roles and functions should be based on the increasingly diverse needs of the students, families, and teachers. Lockhart and Keyes examined the implications of the changing mental health needs of students and their families and the impact on the roles of school counselors and suggested that a mental health counseling role more aptly addresses those needs (1998, ¶ 1). Yet, students also have other needs. School counselors must have the roles and skills to assist the students in multiple areas according to the wellness model. The more school counselors' roles become defined, the less others will see school counselors as jacks-of-all-trades, and therefore be less likely to impose extraneous or inappropriate duties on school counselors (Hackney, 1990).

Perspectives

Principals' perspectives. Research has shown that the school principals' support for school counselors' roles is essential to the development, application, and maintenance of counseling programs, as well as to the success of these school counseling professionals and their programs (Brock & Ponec, 1998; Niebuhr, Niebuhr, & Cleveland, 1999). "The ultimate responsibility for the appropriate and effective utilization of all school-based personnel resides with the school principal" (Lieberman, 2004, ¶ 2). The school principals can control the amount of advocacy and leadership school counselors have. The school principal has the control to help define what the school counselor's roles and functions are, as well as and have the control to implement the components of a school counseling program. Unfortunately, the school principals often inappropriately convey the roles and functions of the school counselors.

In one study, results suggested that the perception of school counselors, counselors in training, and principals are, for the most part, similar regarding the roles of school counselors (Monteiro et al., 2006). The school counselors, counselors in training, and principals had different perceptions of how school counselors' time was and should be used on different activities. In a study by Zalaquett, "responses from 500 elementary school principals revealed that school counselors were perceived as having a positive impact on the academic, behavioral, and mental health development of their students; and most principals indicated that they would recommend school counseling to others as a career option (2005, ¶ 1).

Despite ASCA's National Model identifying and defining the functions of school counselors, it is evident that many differences of opinion still exist among school principals (Shoffner & Williamson, 2000). Many school principals seem to hold a view of the roles and functions for school counselors that is different from that described in the standards of the counseling profession (Lampe, 1985; Murray, 1995). Research has implied that ignoring the principal-school counselor relationship and the influence of a principal regarding the implementation and maintenance of guidance and counseling program could be disastrous (Ponec & Brock, 2000, ¶ 4). The teamwork between school counselors and principals is a critical factor in determining the success of comprehensive school counseling programs (Kaplan, 1995; O'Connor, 2002).

Teachers' perspectives. The school counselor's goal in today's society is to assist each student to achieve his or her highest potential. To meet this challenge and achieve this goal demands that teachers and school counselors directly involved with students be aware of and understand the perceptions each holds of one another (Ginter & Scalise,

1990). By increasing awareness of the roles necessary to be a highly functioning school counselor in Tennessee, counselor educators can improve the training, skills and knowledge of the graduate students who desire to be school counselors.

The purpose of this research project was to gain a better understanding of the school counselors' perspective on their preferred and actual job-related activities completed. Understanding the teachers' perspectives regarding the school counselor's role and job-related activities will assist school counselors to be aware of and respect the teachers' beliefs, values, and initiative and therefore work together collaboratively for the benefit of all of the students.

Teachers have a variety of perspectives on the roles and functions of school counselors. There is a wide spectrum regarding the utilization of school counselors. Many teachers utilize the resources of the school counselor. Some teachers actually over-utilize the school counselor's resources whereas some teachers never utilize the resources of the school counseling program and school counselors. Teachers' perspectives regarding the school counselors' roles and functions need to be known in order to understand the basic premises of utilizing or not utilizing the resources of the school counselors and school counseling programs.

The literature is very limited when it comes to information regarding the teachers' perception of the school counselor. The lack of literature available in this area shows the need for additional research and theory in this subject area. According to one study, "secondary school teachers continue to believe that the school counseling and guidance program does make a positive contribution to the instructional program of the school" (Gibson, 1990, ¶ 7). However, in other instances, teachers believe that the school

counselor is the person who pulls students from class and disrupts the educational process (Ingram, 2003, ¶ 8). These unpleasant opinions can often be attributed to a lack of comprehension of the school counselors' roles and functions and how school counselors affect the overall structure of the school experience (Ingram, 2003, ¶ 8).

Wilgus and Shelley suggested that researchers should focus on teachers' perceptions and indicated that a number of writers support "the need for more research to carefully examine the counselor and teacher relationship and the impact teacher attitude plays in counselor roles" (1988, p. 259). The school counselors and teachers create a subsystem that can be beneficial to the students. Teachers interact the most with students and have more knowledge about the students in many different areas. Teachers and school counselors can work collaboratively together to promote the wellness of the students. In a review of research findings from one study implied that schools where an agreement of role expectations exists, school counselors are more likely to be viewed as a resource for teachers, be called upon more frequently to perform a variety of tasks of the helper-consultant system and teachers would be better able to present an accurate description of the work of the counselor to both students and their parents (Ginter & Scalise, 1990, ¶ 14-15).

Implementation of a school counseling program can be different if the system already has designed a specific role for the school counselor or if the school counselor has his/her own agenda. Awareness of the teachers' perspectives can provide insight into the relationship. From there, school counselors can move towards roles which positively enhance the school system by completing the functions necessary for a comprehensive

guidance program. This means working collaboratively with teachers, administrators, and parents. This also means termination of inappropriate job duties.

Parents' and students' perspectives. Parents may perceive the school counselors in a positive light and as a needed resource that will benefit their child and them. Parents may see the school counselor as someone who will label their child, have fears that the child will tell family secrets, label the parents as unfit, and/or acculturate values that do not align with family values. Some parents question whether the school counselor is an advocate for change who is aware and knowledgeable of the child's predicament or is the school counselor really just a representative for the administration or teachers who would like to label the child (Vickers & Minke, 1995). "The relationship between parents and school counselors often is fraught with obstacles" (Ingram, 2003, ¶ 10). However, the results of one study revealed that the majority of the parents surveyed were able to indicate the appropriate roles and functions taken on by the school counselor and the majority of parents perceived their child's high school counselor as performing these appropriate and necessary duties and responsibilities (Quast, 2003, p. iii).

"Research that directly examines students' perceptions of school counselor's role and function are rare" (Akos & Trier, 2004, ¶ 34). If a student's first experiences with a school counselor are positive then it may provide future opportunities for the student to seek assistance or accept assistance from the school counselor or a mental health counselor when needed. Research studies can be limited in the area of students' perspectives because obtaining the students' responses for research requires parental consent.

School counselors' perspectives. The profession's ambiguity concerning the roles and functions of the school counselor has also had the effect of marginalizing school counselors (House & Hayes, 2002; Johnson, 2000). Although there is extensive research on school counseling roles and functions throughout history, researchers have rarely asked school counselors about the school counselors' perspectives on their professional identity (Webber & Mascari, 2006).

An investigation of counselors' perceptions of their own role indicated that they see themselves spending too much time in administrative functions, such as scheduling, disciplinary functions, and clerical duties, and not providing enough services to students (Baggerly, 2002; Baker, 1996; Fitch et al., 2001; Scarborough, 2006; Texas Education Agency, 1996). Research also showed that while performing non-counseling duties may be accommodating for the school, it deteriorates the overall counseling program (Sutton & Fall, 1995). According to ASCA, administrative duties are not a central part of a school counselor's role (2005).

Time seems to be a big obstacle for school counselors. Many counselors spend an inordinate amount of time on non-counseling activities and on inappropriate tasks. School counseling professionals often experience challenges finding ample time for providing direct counseling and guidance services to students (Gysbers & Henderson, 2000). "One of the primary reasons students fail to seek out school counselors for help is the perception that school counselors do not have time to see them" (West, Kayser, Overton, & Saltmarsh, 1991, as cited in Astramovich & Holden, 2002, ¶ 2). Burnham and Jackson had findings that indicated that, on average, school counselors spend 25% of their time on non-guidance activities (2000). In one study, 40% of counselor time was spent in non-

counseling duties (Mascari, 2005, as cited in Webber & Mascari, 2006, ¶ 6). There are many articles in the school counseling literature that have addressed time-management strategies for school counselors (e.g., Eddy, Richardson, & Allberg, 1982; Fairchild, 1986; Fairchild & Seeley, 1994, 1995; Kareck, 1998; Partin, 1983, 1993; and Wilinson, 1988, as cited in Astramovich & Holdden, 2002, ¶ 2). There is just not enough time to complete all the roles and functions necessary for a school counselor. This issue needs to be addressed. Each school counselor must be able to have the opportunity to effectively utilize time to efficiently meet the needs of their school system.

Throughout the literature, an urgent need for school counselor role definition is expressed. The roles and functions of school counselors continue to be misinterpreted (Bemak, 2000; Borders, 2002; Burnham & Jackson, 2000; Herr, 2001; House & Hayes, 2002, Johnson, 2000). Educators need to reexamine their views about what needs to be accomplished in school and by whom. School counselors need to reexamine their own assumptions of their roles and functions.

American School Counselor Association's perspective. The American School Counselor Association (ASCA) serves as the leading voice of school counselors. ASCA provides vision and direction for school counselors and school counseling programs. ASCA launched the ASCA National Model® for school counseling programs in an effort to standardize comprehensive school counseling programs within the school systems (2005). This provides the school counselor with specific functions and a base structure to work from that functions collaboratively with the school system.

According to ASCA, "a comprehensive school counseling program requires the majority of a school counselor's time is in direct service with students and non-school

counseling tasks should be eliminated or reassigned" (2005, p. 23). Inappropriate activities for school counselors includes registration, scheduling, absenteeism and tardiness, discipline, maintaining student records, supervising study halls, clerical record keeping, data entry, individual therapeutic counseling, coordinating and/or administering tests, teaching classes when teachers are absent, computing GPAs, assisting with duties in the principal's office, and preparation of individual education plans (2005, p. 56).

In 1994, ASCA proactively announced the school counselor's role as facilitator and change agent in the local school community. Because of the unique position of school counselors in the school system, school counselors can be leaders in the educational process and in educational reform. Current themes of leadership, advocacy, and systemic change are emphasized in the ASCA National Model (2005) and may challenge school counselors' and stakeholders' beliefs and assumptions about the school counselor's role.

"With counselor-student ratios averaging 513:1 (American Counseling Association, 1999), it is difficult to picture that school counselors can complete all job roles and functions and facilitate development in all areas for all students" (Whiston, 2002, ¶ 16). Many counselors have even higher ratios of students. In Tennessee, state law mandates school counselor-to-student ratios with grades kindergarten through sixth grade at 1:500 and grades seventh through 12th grade at 1:350 (ASCA, 2006, ¶ 43).

Paraprofessionals could reduce the non-counseling duties of the school counselor. In 1999, ASCA revised the position statement on counseling paraprofessionals. Suggested tasks for paraprofessionals include clerical activities, resource management,

operating equipment, data collection and analysis, and assisting the school counselor with responsibilities within the program.

Education Trust's perspective. An influential organization that is at the forefront of transforming the identity of school counselors is the Education Trust. In 1990, the American Association for Higher Education established the Education Trust. The Education Trust is a non-profit organization supported by the Dewitt Wallace-Reader's Digest Fund, the MetLife Foundation and many other foundations and supporters. The Education Trust has been and continues to grow in their influence on closing the achievement gaps that divide low-income students and minority students from other students. "The Education Trust works for the high academic achievement of all students at all levels, pre-kindergarten through college" (Education Trust, 2007, ¶ 1).

The Education Trust is taking an active approach in transforming the roles of the school counselors because they see the profession filling important, specific roles within the school systems. According to the Education Trust, school counseling is "a profession that focuses on the relations and interactions between students and their school environment with the expressed purpose of reducing the effect of environmental and institutional barriers that impede student academic success" (2007, ¶ 1). Focus on the relations and interactions means utilizing a systems approach in the profession.

The Education Trust's position is that school counselors have not been a part of the standards-based education reform movement and school counselors should be in the center of this educational reform movement. The goal of the Education Trust is to make school counseling vital to the mission of schools and educational reform by preparing

school counselors with the skills and knowledge essential to help all students meet high academic standards (2007).

The Education Trust has implemented two initiatives to connect school counselors and standards-based education reform. First, the Metlife Foundation funded the National School Counselor Training Initiative (NSCTI) in 2002 and continues to provide professional development training for practicing school counselors (Education Trust, 2007). In 2003, the Education Trust formed The National Center for Transforming School Counseling (NCTSC) with funding from the MetLife Foundation and the Dewitt Wallace-Reader's Digest Fund. The Dewitt Wallace-Reader's Digest Fund has supported research in the area of school counseling since 1991 (Education Trust, 2007). This initiative's focus is on changing the way universities prepare school counselors. NCTSC is now a nation-wide network of organizations and includes state departments of education, school counselor professional associations, institutions of higher education and certain school districts. The state of Tennessee and the educational institutions within Tennessee are not involved with this network.

The National Center for Transforming School Counseling:

- Conducts professional workshops for practicing school counselors in the new vision and skills demanded in standards-based school systems;
- Works to transform counselor preparation programs in higher education;
- Collects, analyzes and disseminates research on effective school counseling practices;
- Works with state departments of education to align policies with NCTSC principles;

- Convenes meetings and conferences with network partners and constituent groups to champion the cause of school counselor reform and equity in education;
- Produces publications, press releases, data tools, syllabi, and policy statements that build capacity and promote this national movement (Education Trust, 2007, ¶ 7).

There has been some debate between the ASCA and the Education Trust over the role of the school counselor. In 1996, the Education Trust conducted a series of focus groups and established solutions and problems related to school counseling and counselor education programs. Guerra (1998a) published these findings and concluded:

- School counselors focus too much on counseling students with serious emotional and social problems while denying students sufficient academic guidance and direction (as cited in Alexander, Kruczek, Zagelbaum, & Ramirez, 2003, ¶ 3).
- Current counselor training programs offer a core of generic counseling courses that do not provide counselors with the specific knowledge and skills needed to be effective in schools. For example, the vast majority of counselor preparation programs emphasize a mental health model with few connections to student achievement as an important indicator of student success (as cited in Alexander et al., 2003, ¶ 3).

CACREP accredited school counseling programs such as the University of Tennessee do require that school counselors have specific knowledge and skills needed to

be effective in schools. For example, a goal of this current study is provide information on specific knowledge needed by school counselors to be more effective in the Tennessee school systems.

Since 1998, there has been more controversy over the roles and functions of school counselors. “An on-going controversy within the school counseling profession is the incongruence between the actual practices of school counselors and what is advocated as best practices” (Brott & Myers, 1999; Burnham & Jackson, 2000). There is also controversy because various groups interpret the purpose of the school counselor in a variety of ways.

The Education Trust and ASCA take a very different approach to the roles and functions of the school counselors. The issue is on whether school counselors should focus on academic achievement advocated by the Education Trust or mental health advocated by ASCA. In a study by Webber, 78% of the school counselors described themselves as “a counselor working in a school setting” and 18% of the school counselors identified themselves as “an educator using counselor skills” (2004, as cited in Webber & Mascari, 2006, ¶ 4).

Transformation of the school counselor to a leader of educational reform and advocacy could overlap with the roles of administrators and teachers. This change in focus could limit school counselors in their role as a mental health counselor. If school counselors move away from the role of direct service, other mental health care providers will fill the void. Counseling, the word that identifies the school counseling profession, is vital in the work of school counselors and the primary indicator of one’s professional identity (Stone & Dahir, 2006, p. 64).

School counselors become school counselors because they want to help students. School counselors want to help all students reach their potential in all areas of development. School counselors are counselors in the school: counselors that counsel. The primary goal of counselors is to help each individual student achieve his or her highest potential. This includes academic achievement, educational advancement, and personal/social development. A student needs the best mental health possible to reach their academic potential.

The debate continues regarding the roles and functions of school counselors among school counselors, educators, ASCA, and the Education Trust. Members of the school counseling profession must take a more active part in shaping the role and functions of the school counselor and definition of the school counseling programs.

Integration and Output

Although there is still debate about the roles and functions of the school counselors, many organizations and individuals have integrated their ideals into a larger, more important professional identity for school counselors. In 2005, The Education Trust joined ASCA, The College Board, and the National Association for College Admissions Counseling to form The Coalition to Improve Student Achievement through School Counseling (CISASC). “CISASC has come together to form a united national force for advancing the academic agenda for all students through the work of school counselors” (Education Trust, 2007, ¶ 2).

Other organizations are also taking action in the development of professional school counselors’ identity. For example, in Virginia, a “School Counseling Leadership Team (SCLT)” was created that utilizes a collaborative team to advocate for the

transformed role of professional school counselors (Kaffenberger et al., 2006). The SCLT members include school counselors, counselor educators, leaders of school counselor organizations, and school district counseling supervisors. The SCLT has increased communication between these members, offered an opportunity for introduction of the ASCA model, and provided representation for advocacy.

Currently, the SCLT is discussing the importance of gathering data about the role of school counselors in the state of Virginia. “SCLT is also supporting the Virginia School Counseling Association (VSCA) in its labors to gather information about the roles and functions of school counselors in Virginia and to determine the professional development needs of school counselors” (Kaffenberger et al., 2006, ¶ 26).

Under the influences of ASCA, The Education Trust Initiatives, CACREP, and other organizations such as SCLT, the counseling profession has moved forward and is continuing to move through many stages in developing a stable professional identity. For example, “Colbert and Magouirk Colbert (2003) offered a new counselor education research and training model facilitating culture-centered education reform that is consistent with the new vision presented by CACREP (2001), the Education Trust, and ASCA” (as cited in Colbert, Vernon-Jones, & Pransky, 2006, p. 72).

Licensure and accreditation have also defined and increased the standards of the school counselor’s functions and role. The school counselor identity has been established as a specialty of counseling and has the opportunity for growth and expansion within the school systems. From there, appropriate job duties and functions can be facilitated by appropriate knowledge bases.

Knowledge Bases

The skills and knowledge that school counselors bring to their role are important resources for the school system. These skills and knowledge bases operate in the realms of advocacy, leadership, collaboration, counseling, coordination, consultation, and systemic change. Part of this research project includes gaining information regarding the knowledge bases and level of knowledge within these knowledge bases of the school counselors.

Knowledge can create skills that school counselors can use to enhance their roles and job functions. Part of the job requirements of school counselors is to be knowledgeable and have skills in a variety of areas. School counselors must be able to work with a variety of populations in a variety of arenas and deliver services through curriculum, responsive services, individual student planning and systemic support. School counselors have knowledge in specific areas and by distinguishing program responsibilities; students can obtain the best possible services from those who are most knowledgeable in certain areas (Lehmanowski, 1991). School counselors can utilize their knowledge and a multitude of skills to get the job done. These skills include technology, interpersonal skills, counseling skills, organizational skills, professionalism, classroom management, teaching, etc. A school counselor is like a jack-of-all-trades and master at none.

For example, current technology has increased resource options throughout our society. Counselor educators have an obligation to prepare students to use technology appropriately in the counseling field. Technology can be a very beneficial tool for counselors. Telephones, cell phones, faxes, computer, e-mail, and the Internet can all

benefit our society and help a counselor with job responsibilities. However, confidentiality can be compromised when we add communication devices into the counselor's arena of services. A school counselor's knowledge in this area will affect job performance. For example, if students correspond by e-mail to the school counselor regarding a problem, confidentiality could be limited. E-mail correspondence can be unprotected over the Internet and school counselors must be aware of protective measures for the students' confidentiality.

Technology allows easier access to information. Utilizing technology can provide opportunities for learning and training. New ways to conduct research can be created by using technology. The school counselor needs a wide array of knowledge to complete his/her job successfully. Technology can be a valuable resource in the development of a school counselor. Technology may be a resource that can fill the gaps in the knowledge bases that school counselors need in order to fulfill their job responsibilities successfully and be the most beneficial to the students and the school system.

The American Counseling Association Code of Ethics states school counselors should only practice within the boundaries of their competence (ACA, 2005, p. 9). Knowledge is capital for the school counselor to utilize for the system. The school counselor can assist students if they are knowledgeable and skilled in areas that affect the students.

In a recent poll of counselors from 15 public school in Frederick County, Maryland, school "counselors indicated that they were working students diagnosed by clinicians as having fetal alcohol syndrome, fragile X, crack baby syndrome, autism, traumatic brain injury, depression, anxiety disorder, oppositional disorder, dissociative

disorder, psychosis, conduct disorder, and being developmentally delayed" (Lockhart, & Keys, 1998, ¶ 8). Counselors must be knowledgeable to effectively assist students in this array of diagnoses. It would be unethical of a school counselor to assist a student with conduct disorder if the counselor did not have the knowledge and skills specific to the related issues.

As schools move forward in meeting the needs of these students, important questions must be asked about whether the skills and knowledge offered at present by school counselors are adequate. Counselor educators and school counselor education programs then become responsible as they are expected to facilitate the knowledge and skills needed by future school counselors.

A concern is the difference between counselor educator programs and actual school counselor practices (Burnham & Jackson, 2000; Johnson, 2000; Paisley & Hayes, 2003). There is a lack of clarity about whether counselor education preparation programs prepare student school counselors for the role they can play in the educational reform movement (Bemak & Chung, 2005: Perusse & Goodnough, 2001). Also, according to Lockhart and Keys, "Most current school counselor education programs fail to address many of the mental health issues that school counselors now face" (1998, ¶ 11). Counselor educators must be aware of theses mental issues. However, mental health issues cover a vast range of knowledge and skills and all areas may not be addressed.

School counselors are set into culturally prescribed roles and systems that do not prepare the school counselors for the roles and functions necessitated by the schools of today. These statements reemphasize the debate regarding a mental health model or an academic achievement model. The ASCA National Model was broad in scope and

incorporates the mental health model and the academic achievement model into the ASCA model.

The ASCA National Model for School Counseling Programs provides school counselors with vision, direction and even specific curriculum objectives for the students in a developmental sequence. The scope of the objectives is generalized and this provides school counselors with the opportunity to present the information/knowledge/activity in a variety of ways. The Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Education Programs (CACREP) has been very influential in the core requirements of school counseling students who are attending an accredited school.

Knowledge and expertise are important in order to do a good job as a school counselor. School counselors are expected to continue their own professional development throughout the span of their career. This is very important, as it is impossible to learn everything in graduate school that could benefit the school counselors and the school counseling programs. Professional development opportunities are especially important for older school counselors who have been out of school for numerous years and are unaware of better practices and resources that can assist students to succeed in the school.

School counselors must be prepared to deal with a variety of issues. For example, if a student comes in for assistance in a rural area school for a self-mutilation and outside resources are unavailable, what should a school counselor do? The primary responsibility of the school counselor is to promote the welfare of the student. School counselors must be competent to assist students. Therefore knowledge gained must be relevant to their school population. The knowledge survey was designed to gain a better understanding of

what knowledge is relevant to assisting the students in the state of Tennessee. The knowledge survey also provided the respondent with the opportunity to express any knowledge base they had that was not defined that they felt was important.

Accountability and Responsibility

The school system, administrators, and school counselors must choose which services are provided and the concern may be that these functions are chosen subjectively rather than objectively. In one study, findings revealed that the professional identity of school counselors might decide what and how services are dispersed to students and to the school community (Brott & Myers, 1999, ¶ 43). Accountability provides a format to allow the functions to be chosen objectively to reach the maximum amount of students. Though, the single student may still fall through the cracks. Using data helps school counselors to develop strategies and interventions that will enable students to reach their fullest potential. Counselor educators can use data to facilitate the development of the school counselors therefore enhancing the positive development of students.

The goal of being responsible and accountable seems like common sense but in today's changing world for an individual and for social systems, who is responsible/accountable? Who wants to be? How much do we want to be responsible for? Are we adding another social role to our multi-faceted lives? Within the framework of the accountability system of the ASCA National Model (2005), the question "How are students different as a result of the school counseling program?" is answered.

Accountability is an absolute necessity within the Tennessee Model of Comprehensive School Counseling and the American School Counselor Association's National Model of School Counseling. The No Child Left Behind (2001) legislation has

increased expectations of accountability for everyone in education including school counselors in order to ensure higher quality of education for students. All educators work in an accountability-driven environment.

For school counselors, the main purpose of collecting data is for program assessment and evaluation. It is important for a comprehensive school counseling program to be data-driven. School counselors can use data to show the impact of the school counseling program. According to Stone and Dahir, data informs, confirms progress, and reveals shortcomings in student performance (2004). To create a data-driven school counseling program, data must be gained from a multitude of perspectives including student-achievement data, achievement-related data, standards- and competency-related data, disaggregated data, and program evaluation data (ASCA, 2005). Data can document the results of classroom instruction, individual and group counseling, individual planning, strategies and interventions. The data can then be used to improve students' performance and provide equitable access for students to programs and resources.

Student achievement data are measures of the students' academic progress. These data fields can include standardized test data, drop out and graduation rates, promotion and retention rates, grade point averages, SAT and ACT scores, and completion of specific academic programs. Achievement related data are measured by data in fields correlated to academic achievement. This data could include parental/guardian involvement, attendance rates, discipline referrals, suspension rates, homework completion rates, extracurricular participation rates, course enrollment rates, and alcohol and drug violations. Standards- and competency-related data measure student mastery of

the competencies outlined in ASCA's National Standards (2006, p. 49). These data could include percentages of students with four-year plans, percentages of students who complete academic goals and tasks, and percentages of students with conflict resolution skills, etc.

In order to show a school counseling program's impact, it is important to look at program evaluation data. Program evaluation data includes process, perception and results data. Process data describe the way the school counseling program is structured, conducted and whether prescribed practices were followed. Process evaluation involves reviewing how the program was carried out. Process evaluation answers questions about the number of people served, the amount of time spent on service delivery, and the number of sessions that were provided (Schmidt, 1993).

Evaluation is a continuous process. Throughout the processes of evaluations, changes can be made in the program to adapt to the culture and needs of the school system. The collection of process data is important in research. Research regarding school counselors is widely supported as a component of accountability. Process data can include what functions the school counselors complete and for whom these functions were performed.

It is important for counselor educators and school counselors to improve the scholarship of teaching by completing research and creating pedagogical content knowledge. Accountability is not a new concept; it has been an issue almost from the very beginning of guidance and counseling in the schools (Sabella, 2006, ¶ 2). What are

school counselors doing? Are school counselors utilizing their time and resources effectively? Are school systems using their school counselors and resources effectively?

Perception data highlights program accomplishments. Perception data are gathered from needs assessments, surveys and report opinions. “Results data answer “So what?’ and provide evidence that a student competency is not just mastered but has effected course-taking patterns, graduation rates, knowledge attainment, attendance, behavior, and/or academic achievement” (ASCA, 2003).

Another data source of importance to highlight program accomplishments is school improvement data. School improvement data provides information regarding the current status of student needs, accomplishments and progress. When the school counseling program impacts school improvement data, efficacy is self evident and these deliberate practices lead to increased levels of student success (Stone & Dahir, 2004).

Accountability and responsibilities are themes that arise throughout the book *Intermediate Man* to reduce psychic distance. Lachs defines psychic distance as the direct result of the lack of direct experience (1981, p. 13). Psychic distance is a concept that can be significant to counselor educators. Counselor educators can reduce the psychic distance by increasing knowledge and direct experience within the realms of school systems and individuals.

In a system, people need to be responsible for their self and are responsible for how their actions affect others. Counselor educators can facilitate a better understanding of human behavior and the relation to experiencing the world more directly, being responsible, and accountable for the cause and effect of one’s actions. According to

Lachs, “education must be the development of body, intellect and character all at once” (1981, p. 141). Counselor educators educate the school counselors and must enhance the development of body, intellect and character of school counselors.

Counselor educators and school counselors are deemed social change agents who have responsible roles in our communities and schools and with people and individuals. Counselor educators and school counselors have the opportunity to decrease psychic distance by “mediating” people to experience the world, to grasp the consequences of one’s actions and inactions, and to be responsible and accountable. Responsibility and accountability can reduce psychic distance.

Counselor educators are knowledgeable about human behavior and have the opportunity to use this knowledge of human behavior to increase awareness of systems and systemic interactions and improve psychic distance. Counselor educators have a role, responsibility and goal to assist people to have more enriched lives. Counselor educators have the responsibility to provide school counselors with the knowledge and skills necessary to utilize the systems surrounding the student. Counselor educators can assist school counselors with enriching their skills to facilitate their capital to benefit everyone and to enrich the lives of the students in the school systems.

For counselor educators, the tasks of teaching school counselors all the skills needed to complete their job functions may seem daunting and nearly impossible. School counselors have many job responsibilities. Over time, many more responsibilities have become attached to the school counselors. School counselors have had to learn to compress activities and balance all the needs. Some responsibilities of school counselors have had to be reduced or eliminated to maintain other essential roles. This reduction or

elimination of some tasks has reduced the possibility of accomplishing the goal of assisting all students to their fullest potential.

Conclusion

The literature regarding the role of the school counselor has flourished over the last century. Role identity and role ambiguity has been a reoccurring theme running throughout the literature. Teachers, principals, parents, students, stakeholders, professional organizations and counselor educators have been influential in determining the roles, functions and knowledge of school counselors. Additional data is needed to update and supplement the literature and provide more specific details on school counselors' roles, functions and knowledge.

CHAPTER 3

METHOD

Developing the Question

Counselor educators must prepare school counselors to work with developing students with knowledge of the issues the students may face. Research can be helpful in assisting school counselors and counselor educators to offer better services, prevent and amend problems, and make better programmatic and policy decisions, all for the main intention of improving the lives of our students (Olkin, 1999, p. 308).

To prepare school counselors to work in the current school environment, they need to understand the challenges, environments and demands to be faced. The proposed current research project *Tennessee State Public School Counselors' Time, Tasks, and Knowledge* had two objectives. The first objective of this research study was to measure how Tennessee public school counselors actually spend their time and how they would prefer to spend their time in job-related activities. The second objective of this research study was to assess the areas of knowledge Tennessee public school counselors have, knowledge they need to have and don't have, and knowledge they do not have and do not need in order to complete the necessary roles and functions of the school counselors.

The research questions proposed included:

1. How do Tennessee public professional school counselors actually spend their time in job-related activities?
2. How would Tennessee public professional school counselors prefer to spend their time in job-related activities?

3. What knowledge enhances or would enhance the effectiveness of Tennessee public professional school counselors in order to complete their job-related activities?

Research Instrument: Knowledge Survey

Research needs to look at the underlying skills and knowledge of school counselors that are necessary to complete the job's functions. One research instrument used for this research study was a survey developed by the principal investigator, Laura Hebert. The survey assessed the knowledge that would enhance the effectiveness of Tennessee public school counselors in order to complete their job-related activities. This knowledge survey can provide information on the extent of knowledge school counselors have about specific subjects. The knowledge survey was created to understand the breadth and depth of knowledge of the school counselors in Tennessee. The knowledge survey has a total of 98 knowledge items defined as knowledge bases.

Through self-report on the survey, school counselors provided their level of knowledge in a large variety of areas that covered counseling issues, professional identity, student development, systems and relationships, physical health issues, and school to work issues of students. The school counselors in this research study were able to define their knowledge level as expert, knowledgeable, limited knowledge, no knowledge and no need, and no knowledge and a need.

Investigating a variety of school counseling resources that provided topics related to the school counseling profession created the knowledge survey. The knowledge themes used in the survey were obtained from a variety of resources including:

- School counseling textbooks
- Topics from counseling mail order catalogs
- Counseling topics and issues on internet sites
- Sevier County's school counselors' meetings
- Themes in professional counseling journals
- Professional knowledge of themes/issues
- American School Counselor Association's position statements
- School counselors' themes for presentations at conferences
- Related school counseling research articles

At a Sevier County school counselors meeting on May 16, 2006, the items on the knowledge survey were reviewed by a knowledgeable group of school counselors. This discussion group created additional knowledge topics that were missing from the survey. School counselors participating in the study had the opportunity to add any additional topics of knowledge that the school counselor knows and uses in order to fulfill job responsibilities at the end of the survey. Most important, face validity of the research survey was established at the meeting.

Research Instrument: School Counselor Activity Rating Scale

Scale design. The School Counselor Activity Rating Scale (SCARS) instrument was used to measure the frequency with which Tennessee public school counselors actually spend their time in job-related activities and the frequency with which they would prefer to spend their time in job-related activities. Frequency was measured by a 5-point verbal frequency rating scale revealing "how often" an activity was performed.

The scale contained four intervention activities subscales: counseling, coordination, consultation, and curriculum and a non-guidance scale. The non-guidance scale was broken down into three subscales: Clerical, Fair Share and Administrative.

Development of the SCARS. The SCARS was developed by Dr. J. L. Scarborough at the University of Massachusetts. The primary investigator of this research study had the opportunity to meet with Dr. Scarborough at the American Counseling Association Conference in Montreal, Canada in 2006. Dr. Scarborough provided permission to use SCARS for this research project. The wording of the scale used in the e-mail survey was the exact to the wording in the scale used by Dr. Scarborough. In Dr. Scarborough's format, the SCARS was constructed in a way that participants could identify their actual frequency rating and preferred frequency rating for each activity before moving on to the next item. In the current research study, the school counselors completed the scale for "actual" activities and then the next section was for "preferred" activities. This alteration was due to the nature of the SPSS survey program used to create the survey for this research project.

Dr. Scarborough completed a study regarding SCARS that was published in the Professional School Counseling Journal in 2005. This study examined the initial reliability and validity of the SCARS and obtained data about how the school counselors actually and preferably spent their time in job-related activities. Throughout the phases of the study, Dr. Scarborough assessed the content validity, construct validity and reliability of SCARS through a variety of means including a retrospective technique, a "think aloud" interview, and review by knowledgeable colleagues (2005). Examining group differences further assessed the construct validity of SCARS and convergent construct

validity was established. “Discriminant construct validity was established by examining correlations between SCARS subscales (Actual scale) and a demographic variable with which they were not expected to associate” (Scarborough, 2005, ¶ 31).

Scarborough’s findings supported the curriculum, coordination, counseling, and consultation interventions of school counselors in a comprehensive school counseling program (2006, ¶ 33). “Results supported utility of the SCARS to be a measure of process data reflecting how school counselors actually spend their time versus how they would prefer to spend their time in job-related activities” (Scarborough & Culbreth, 2006, ¶ 32). The SCARS can also be helpful in determining the time devoted to the major interventions of a comprehensive, developmental school counseling program (ASCA, 1999, 2003; Borders & Drury, 1992; Cobia & Henderson, 2003).

In a study of elementary, middle and high school counselors in two southern states (North Carolina and Virginia), Dr, Scarborough utilized the SCARS as part of the investigation to examine discrepancies, and the factors predictive of the discrepancies, between the actual practice and preferred practice in interventions associated with a comprehensive, developmental school counseling program (2006). The results of the study indicated that school counselors prefer to be spending their time in agreement with best practices of a comprehensive, developmental counseling program.

Best practices can be accomplished by following the National Standards for School Counseling Programs that outlines a model of knowledge, attitudes and skill competencies that all students should achieve as a result of participating in a school counseling program (Campbell & Dahir, 1997). Best practices includes four fundamental interventions of school counseling programs: counseling (individual and small group),

curriculum (classroom instruction), consultation (with teachers, other professionals, parents, etc), and coordination (the organization and management of regular and special program activities (ASCA, 1999; Borders & Drury, 1992; Myrick, 2003). Empirical research supports the benefits of the four interventions (counseling, curriculum, consultation, and coordination) of school counselors (Borders & Drury, 1992; Whiston & Sexton, 1998). "Findings reveal that more fully implemented comprehensive, developmental school counseling programs have positive effects on overall student development including academic, career, and emotional development, academic achievement, as well as quality of life" (Gysbers, Lapan, & Blair, 1999; Lapan, Gysbers, & Petroski, 2001; Lapan, Gysbers, & Sun, 1997, as cited in Scarborough & Culbreth, 2006, p. 4).

A recent study by Scarborough and Culbreth found discrepancies between how school counselors actually spend their time and how they would prefer to spend their time (2006, p. 22). This current research project may provide additional empirical support for the SCARS and for comprehensive, developmental school counseling programs.

Participants in Research

The participants were defined as school counselors employed by a public school in the state of Tennessee. The participants were school counselors from all grade levels (kindergarten through 12th grade). E-mails obtaining the research survey link were sent to potential participants (Appendices A & B).

The Counseling Director at the State Department of Education of Tennessee provided 1279 e-mail addresses. Prior approval to obtain the e-mail addresses had been

granted by the state department of Tennessee (Appendix C). E-mail addresses provided included 1055 for school counselors and 224 e-mail addresses for counseling supervisors.

The research survey was sent by e-mail to all e-mail addresses on the list from the state department. For the counseling supervisors, the e-mail requested forwarding the research study to all of the school counselors in the county. Of the school counselors' e-mails, 114 were invalid and 22 of the counseling supervisors' e-mails were invalid. Therefore, 941 (89.2%) of the e-mails were successfully sent to school counselors and 202 (90.2%) of the e-mails to the counseling supervisors were successfully sent.

E-mails were also sent out on a computer listserv of the Tennessee Counseling Association, the Smoky Mountain Counseling Association, and the Tennessee School Counseling Association. When an e-mail is addressed to a listserv mailing list, it is automatically broadcast to individuals on the list.

Procedures

The e-mail included the survey that was created by the web survey tool called mrInterview. The researcher designed the survey in a web browser, activated it, ran frequencies as it continued to collect data and then downloaded the data. The questions become variable labels and the responses become value labels in an SPSS file.

Participation in this research project was voluntary. School counselors had the opportunity to choose to not participate in the project without negative consequences. To promote a higher return rate, four gift certificates were offered in a drawing if the participant wanted to return their e-mail address with the forms. These e-mail addresses were not used in the research project and were destroyed after the drawing. The drawing was completed on December 9, 2006. Four $50.00 gift certificates from Amazon.com

were sent to four randomly drawn e-mail addresses with a thank you for participating in the research study *Tennessee State Public School Counselors' Time, Tasks, and Knowledge*.

As part of the research project, participants received via e-mail:

- Information regarding the research project (Appendix B),
- Informed Consent Procedures (Appendix B),
- The School Counselor Activity Rating Scale (Appendix D),
- Tennessee State Public School Counselors' Knowledge Survey (Appendix D),
- Demographic Data Sheet (Appendix D),

The research participants received the information regarding the research project through e-mail along with the survey and the scale during the week of October 2nd through the 6th in 2006. The e-mail included the purpose of the study, procedures, potential risks and discomforts, anticipated benefits to the subjects and society, alternatives to participation, no cost for participation, and no financial obligations. The e-mail also covered the issues of privacy and confidentiality, participation and withdrawal, withdrawal of participation by the investigator, information regarding the investigators, and the rights of research subjects.

Also, according to the e-mail sent to the participants, the completion and submission of the assessment and survey were the school counselor's consent to voluntarily participate in this research study. The participant could withdraw their consent any time prior to completing and returning the forms.

A second e-mail (Appendix E) was sent out during the week of October 9th through the 13th of 2006 to the school counselors and counseling supervisors as a reminder to complete or forward the research survey. Also, a request in the e-mail asked respondents to complete the survey again if their computer timed out before completion of the survey. If the computer timed out, the survey was not counted and data was not obtained.

Risks and Benefits

Potential risks for participation in this research study were minimal. Withdrawal from the study could have occurred at anytime prior to the submission of completed results. There were no penalties for discontinuation of participation. Participants were not waiving any legal claims, rights, or remedies because of their participation in this research project. The participant's privacy and confidentiality were protected. No information about the participants or provided by the participants during the research were disclosed to others without the participant's written permission, except (a) if necessary to protect our rights or welfare or (b) if required by law. However, no individual results were made available due to the need to protect the confidentiality of all participants. When the results of the research were published or discussed in conferences, no information was included that would reveal participants' identity. Participants were entitled to the aggregate results of the study.

The research participants did not expect to benefit directly from participation in this research study. The anticipated benefits of the research study include increasing the knowledge of counselor educators as to what knowledge, information, and education would be beneficial to school counselors and students in future programs of study. The

survey took approximately 30 to 45 minutes to complete the assessment, survey and demographic data sheet and e-mail the forms to the researcher.

Data

The data was downloaded from a computer program called the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) Dimension Net. Data was analyzed through the statistical software tool Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) 14.0. The data was stored in a computer that was safe and secure. The primary investigator was the only one with access to the data. All e-mail addresses obtained for the drawing were deleted. There are no names on any data sheets.

The primary investigator maintained all materials in a locked and secured area when data were being analyzed. When in use, data were inaccessible to other's view. The data is to be stored for two years and then destroyed.

The analysis of the data included two stages. First, the knowledge survey data were downloaded into an SPSS file. The knowledge data were categorized into subsets. Means and standard deviations of the data were obtained. Individual Analysis of Variances (ANOVAs) and Multivariate Analysis of Variances (MANOVA) were run to look at the demographic data in relation to the levels of knowledge. Since there were more than two groups of classification in the demographic data, multiple comparisons of post hoc tests were completed to obtain possible significant mean differences.

The next stage of the research project analyzed the data obtained from the School Counselor Activity Scale portion of the research survey. Data were downloaded into an SPSS file. Means and standard deviations were obtained. Then, paired samples t-tests

were run. Internal consistency reliability of the School Counselor Activity Scale was identified using Cronbach's alpha.

My Perspective

For the past 7 years, I have been a school counselor at an elementary school with an average population of 750 students. I enjoy my job immensely. I provide classroom instruction to every class at the school once a week. I teach character education and social skills to approximately 40 classes a week (over 60% of my time). I provide approximately 10 sessions a week with students in small group settings and individual counseling (15% of my time).

I have bus duty in the mornings and in the afternoon, and I have created and maintain the web page for the school (15% of my time) I have also substituted for teachers when a sub is not available. I enjoy these activities as it provides opportunity for interaction with the students. I am also the school's state testing coordinator. These opportunities have put me in the position of disciplinarian that conflicts with my role as a school counselor. Also, these activities have limited the time in which I can complete appropriate school counseling functions. There are many activities that I would like to add to my list of duties but have no time for. I would like to provide parenting classes. I would like to complete home visits. I would like to increase community liaisons and community resources for our school system. I would like to see more teamwork in an effort to fully utilize the capital around us for the benefit of everyone.

Through personal and professional experience, I have observed and experienced that the school counselors' roles vary tremendously. I have previously worked in a variety of settings with student populations including college, high school and middle

school students. It seems the role of the school counselor is viewed differently across many different divisions including culture, relationships (parent, teacher, and student), locations (urban, rural, etc.) and grade level (elementary, middle, etc.). A high school counselor in an urban area has a totally different work experience than an elementary counselor in a rural area.

I also have learned that there are many opportunities and doors for a school counselor to open that can enhance the lives of the people within the school system and also the surrounding community. The school counselor is in a role to support the healthy development of our children. However, role ambiguity is at the forefront. Role ambiguity is defined as the lack of clear, consistent information regarding responsibilities of a role and how it can best be performed (Rizzo, House, & Lirtzman, 1970). The information regarding the roles of the school counselor differs for students, parents, teachers, school systems, different administrators, the state model, and the national model.

The ASCA national model can provide the backbone of a counseling program. Yet, I have not observed nor have the knowledge of any school system or school in the state of Tennessee that has completely implemented either the national model nor the state model. At my school, the Tennessee model and standards were implemented because I had the knowledge about them from graduate school. As a professional, I have not been provided any information or emphasis from the school, the school system, or the state department of education on implementation of a comprehensive school counseling program. I have chosen to implement a comprehensive counseling program or utilize the standards of the state model. It has been my personal and professional choice as it is for the benefit of the students.

This year, the Counseling Director from the state department of Tennessee provided a copy of the Tennessee Model for Comprehensive School Counseling to the participants at the first Smokey Mountain Counseling Association Conference that was held at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville on September 30th, 2006. Now, this is not to say that the model has not been promoted at other conferences in Tennessee because I am unable to attend most conferences due to a variety of reasons (ex. time, monies, and other professional development opportunities). However, I wonder which school counselors are aware of and implement the model and standards. Hopefully the results from this research study will provide more insight into this issue.

I think school counselors are stereotyped as people that sit in an office at school and help students with small life crisis. According to the literature, school counselors have a variety of duties that are more often administrative duties than student oriented activities. Referrals (usually a large stack) may lie on their desk that is in a closet office and they do not have the time to attend to them.

I have had the opportunity to have "special" resources (interns) that allow more students to gain access to counseling services. If I did not have "special" resources (interns), I would not be capable of doing the job I want to accomplish. Most counselors do not have the resources to even come close to fulfilling the goals of a school counseling program or providing the services needed to all students.

I believe that the school counselor should be a team member within a school system. I believe the school administration, the school counselor, the teacher, the parent(s)/guardian(s), and the student should work together to improve the lives of students. However, I am concerned that though educators state that they want to be a

collaborative team enhancing the system and the academic achievement of students, the system is hierarchal in nature and leaving out the whole child. The systems' interaction, whether it is collaborative or hierarchal, is very dependent on the administration and the culture of the school system.

The role of school counselor is changing. The American School Counselor Association and current literature address the issue of the school counselor's role as it is evolving to include advocacy for all students and to becoming a leader in educational reform. I believe in advocacy for all students. I believe in leadership. Yet, leadership seems limited by the prescribed roles and functions of the system. If a school counselor does not follow the policies created by the principal, county, state, etc. then they are not kept as the school counselor in that system. Stakeholders must become aware of the benefits of both the school counselor and a consistent comprehensive developmental school counseling program could have as part of the school system.

Last, I believe there is too much emphasis on academic achievement instead of looking at achievement of the whole person. The whole person develops throughout the school years. Through personal experience, I have seen that in kindergarten, students are expected to begin reading. Kindergarten used to be a time for students to develop social skills and now that has been placed in the hands of many school counselors. If a student can read but does not have personal and social skills, is that really helping our students to be productive members of our social system? A school counselor's main objective should be to counsel all students to achieve to their fullest potential in all the systems affecting the student. As part of this objective, school counselors must create an environment and

supports for all students to strive and thrive physically, intellectually, and mentally. My biases hopefully will have had minimal effect on this research project.

Summary

Technology was a very important tool in this research study. Technology is becoming an important factor in the research process. Almost all aspects of this research project were completed with the use of multiple computers and programs. The implementation, management and evaluation of the research and data included the use of the Internet, e-mail, listservs, computer statistical programs, and databases. Technology is creating new ways to obtain, maintain and explain research and data.

This research study will obtain, maintain, and explain data on the actual and preferred job-related activities of school counselors and on the knowledge areas of school counselors. Completion of this research study expands the amount of data in regards to the activities and knowledge areas of school counselors in the state of Tennessee.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

The research study created an abundance of data. The data were identified as demographic variables, knowledge survey variables, and school counselor activity rating scale variables. The analysis and results of the data were broken into three categories. First, demographic results are presented to provide a description of the participants in this research study. Second, the results of the knowledge survey are provided, including any correlations to the demographic variables. Last, the results of the School Counselor Activity Scale are specified to complete the analysis of the research data.

Return Rate

Results were collected and analyzed using the SPSS Dimension Net statistical package. From the e-mail addresses, 941 e-mails were sent out, and 305 surveys were completed and returned to the researcher. The return rate was 32%. Of the surveys, 401 timed out before completion and therefore did not provide data useful for this research project. Timed outs occurred when a person opens the survey and at some point during the process the browser window closed. If all of the surveys had not timed out, there could have been a possible return rate of 75%.

The geographical representation of the surveys covered 63 out of 95 counties in the state of Tennessee, which is 66% of the counties (Table 4). Knox County had the highest rate of participation of 8.5%, followed by Rutherford County with 7.2%, Anderson County with 6.2 %, and Shelby County with 5.9% of the respondents. Davidson County and Hamilton County had large target populations and yet had only, respectively, 4.9% and 1.6 % participation in this research study.

Participants

Age. The age range of school counselors participating in this research study was 25 to 69 years old. The mean age for the school counselor participants was 43.67 with a standard deviation of 10.88.

Gender and ethnicity. The sample of school counselors consisted of 88% (*n* = 269) females and 12% (*n* = 36) males. The school counselors were identified as 94.8% (*n* = 289) Caucasian, 4.9% (*n* = 15) as African American, and .3% (*n* = 1) as Asian American.

Experience and education. The years of experience of the school counselors were distributed among the specified categories. Of the school counselors, 29% (n = 89) of the school counselors had less than 5 years experience, 28% (*n* = 84) had 6 to 10 years of experience, 16% (*n* = 50) of the school counselors had 11 to 15 years of experience, 12% (*n* = 37) of the school counselors had 15 to 20 years of experience, and 15% (*n* = 45) had over 20 years of experience. The sample of school counselors consisted of 79% with an education level of M. A. / M. S., 17% had their Ed. S., and 4% had a Ph.D. / Ed. D.

Community and Title I. In defining the type of community that school counselors in the state of Tennessee worked in, 52% (*n* = 160) of the school counselors worked in rural school system, 30% (*n* = 90) of the school counselors worked in a suburban school system, 12% (*n* = 37) of the school counselors worked in an urban school system, and 6% (*n* = 18) of the school counselors worked in an inner-city school system. In the data analysis, the inner-city population was combined with the urban population for a total of 18% defined as an urban population.

Title I is the largest grant program of the U.S. Department of Education and provides funding for the neediest children in the U.S. Title I provides funding that may be used to provide additional programs and services for students to reach their full potential. Of the school counselors, 45% worked at a school that was defined as a Title I school, and 55% of the school counselors did not work in a Title I funded school. Being a Title I school or not being a Title I school did not have any significance related to any of the variables in this research study.

Grade levels served by school counselors. The grade levels of the students that the school counselors worked with were very diverse. The survey allowed the participants to respond openly to the question of what grade levels the school counselor worked with, and therefore numerous responses were provided, creating a range of diversity. This diversity increased the complexity of how to analyze the data because many school counselors did not just work in a specific grade level but worked with a variety of different levels that were hard to categorize because of multiple overlaps.

Some school counselors worked with just one grade level, and a few school counselors provided services for students ranging from pre-kindergarten to seniors in high school. A school counselor may have worked with 3rd and 4th graders only, whereas another school counselor may have worked with students in kindergarten through 3rd grade. Both of these school counselors were grouped in the category of pre-kindergarten through 5th grade. A school counselor may have only worked with students in 9th grade, and another only with 12th-grades; both were categorized under the group of 9th through 12th grade. Table 5 provides a breakdown of the grade levels served by school counselors.

For part of the data analysis, school counselors were grouped into three categories according to the grade levels served.

The data did not reveal how many schools the school counselor provided services for. This may be an important question to ask in future research because it limits services for the school, especially responsive services and crisis interventions. Yet, because the survey obtained open-ended answers, some school counselors did provide additional information. For example, one school counselor participating in the survey worked with students in kindergarten through 8th grade for four different schools! One can question how effective can a school counselor in serving four schools be. This means four schools in 4 days and what is there to be done on the 5th day? Should the school counselor go to each school daily? Is the school counselor able to teach? Provide responsive services? Provide systemic support for four schools? Attend four sets of PTO meetings, teacher conferences or other activities? Other examples of responses from the survey included:

- "Pk-8th Grades at two schools. One twice a week with 325 students and the other three times a week with 390 students."
- "K-8. I am at an elementary school 1 day a week and a middle school 4 days a week."

School counselor/student ratios. According to the Tennessee Comprehensive School Counseling Model, appropriate counselor/student ratios are critical for program success and increased student achievement and development. Of those surveyed, 6% (n = 19) had a ratio 1:250 students or less, 21% (n = 64) of the school counselors surveyed had a ratio of 1: 250 to 350 students, 42% (n = 129) of the school counselors surveyed had a ratio of 1: 351 to 500 students, and 23% (n = 70) of the school counselors surveyed

served between 501 and 700 students. Most incredible is the fact that 5% (n = 15) of the school counselors surveyed served between 701 and 900 students and 3% (n = 8) of the school counselors surveyed served more than 900 students. Over 30% of the school counselors had ratios higher than the Tennessee and the ASCA national model recommendations.

Knowledge Survey

*Knowledge subsets***.** The knowledge survey results provided an abundance of data. Overall, the participants represented themselves as knowledgeable in the areas related to the field of school counseling. The information collected was the school counselors' subjective idea regarding their level of knowledge on a knowledge subset. The knowledge survey results did not obtain an objective measure of evaluation of knowledge of school counselors.

The knowledge survey asked for the respondent to provide information on their level of knowledge on 98 areas related to the field of school counseling. These areas are defined as knowledge bases in this research project. To be exact, 29,890 pieces of data were obtained for this specific portion of the research survey. The knowledge bases were classified into six subsets in order to organize and analyze the data. The subsets included:

- student achievement (10 items)
- systems and relationships (9 items)
- professional identity (29 items)
- physical health (12 items)
- counseling issues (30 items)
- school to work (8 items)

During the data analysis, “No knowledge and needs the knowledge” and “No knowledge and no need for the knowledge” responses were combined to obtain means and standard deviations regarding the subsets of knowledge of the participants.

The knowledge levels included:

1 = No knowledge (Need and No Need): Minimum

2 = Limited knowledge

3 = Knowledgeable

4 = Expert: Maximum

In the data analysis of the subsets, the means of the knowledge subsets ranged from 2.59 to 2.87. The level of knowledge ranged from a minimum of 1.13 in the subset “School to Work” to a maximum of 4.00 in the subsets of “Student Achievement,” “Systems and Relationships,” “Counseling Issues,” “Professional Identity,” “Physical Health,” and “School to Work.”

Within the knowledge subsets, knowledge varied. In the Student Achievement subset, the highest level of knowledge was the item “New students” topic with a mean of 3.15 and the lowest knowledge base was “English Language Learner” with a mean of 2.39 (see Table 6). The Systems and Relationships subset’s highest level of knowledge was the item “Relationships” with a knowledge mean of 3.03, and the lowest knowledge base was “Mobility” with a mean of 2.60 (see Table 7). The Professional Identity subset’s highest knowledge base was the item “Job Requirements” topic with a mean of 3.16, and the lowest knowledge base was “Full Service Schools” with a mean of 2.15 (see Table 8).

In the Counseling Issues subset, the highest level of knowledge was with the item “Social skills/Lifeskills” with a mean of 3.17, and the lowest knowledge base was

"Selective Mutism" with a mean of 1.87 (see Table 9). The Physical Health subset's highest level of knowledge was with the "Pregnancy" topic with a mean of 2.90. and "Medications/Psychopharmacology" was the lowest knowledge base with a mean of 2.25 60 (see Table 10). Within the School to Work subset, the highest level of knowledge was pertained to the item "Career Development/Counseling" with a mean of 3.00, and the lowest knowledge base was "Military Options" with a mean of 2.36 (see Table 11).

Knowledge: Community and Title I. A Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) was run to look at the demographic classification in relation to the levels of knowledge. Demographic classification included rural, suburban, urban and inner-city communities. The results were significant: F (12, 594) = 2.252, p = .009.

To determine which knowledge items were different by demographic classification, individual Analyses of Variances (ANOVAs) were run (see Table 12). The individual ANOVAs found the dependent variable "Physical Health" was significant in relation to demographic classification with a significance level of .024. The dependent variable "School to Work" was significant in relation to demographic classification with a significance level of .002.

Table 13 shows the average knowledge to the items "Physical Health" and "School to Work" compared by demographic location to determine how demographic classification differed within these knowledge subsets. Since there were more than two groups (urban, suburban, and rural), multiple comparisons of Post Hoc Tests were completed (see Table 14). The dependent variables, "Physical Health" and "School to Work," mean differences were significant at the .05 level. The subset "Physical Health" had a significant mean difference between rural and suburban classification, p = .017.

School counselors in rural areas had more knowledge in “Physical Health” than school counselors in the suburban areas. The subset “School to Work” had a significant mean difference between rural and suburban classification (p = .001). School counselors in rural areas had more knowledge in “School to Work” than school counselors in the suburban areas.

An ANOVA was run on the significance of whether a school had Title I classification or not, were found relating to the knowledge factors and there were no significant differences (p = .126) as F (6, 298) = 1.679.

Grade level differences. The research participants were classified as elementary, middle, and high school counselors for part of the data analysis. For the data analysis, some school counselor participants could be identified in multiple groups due to the variety of grade levels served. For example, a school counselor serving 2nd grade through 6th grade was counted in two different groups: elementary and middle. A school counselor could be labeled in all three categories if the school counselor worked at a school that was kindergarten through 12th. Due to the overlap in the grade level classification, some participants were defined as an elementary school counselor and a middle school counselor, as a middle school counselor and a high school counselor, etc. Each counselor was labeled “YES” or “NO” for elementary, middle, and high school (see Table 5).

A MANOVA was run, and the results found significant differences between elementary school counselor participants (n = 130) and other participants, F (6, 298) = 24.028, p < .001. Looking at the means in Table 15, elementary school counselors had more knowledge in the subset “Counseling Issues” than other school counselors.

However, the means show that elementary school counselors had less knowledge in the subset “School to Work” than those who are not elementary school counselors.

Individual ANOVAs found that the dependent variable “Counseling Issues” was significant in relation to elementary school classification with a significance level of .016 and the dependent variable “School to Work” was significant in relation to elementary school counselors with a significance level of $p < .001$ (see Table 16).

Middle school counselor participants ($n = 128$) had differences from the other participants MANOVA results found F (6, 298) = 2.315, $p < .001$. The individual ANOVAs found dependent variable “Counseling Issues” was significant in relation to middle school classification with a significance level of .010 (see Table 17). The dependent variable “Professional Identity” was significant in relation to middle school counselors with a significance level of .018. The dependent variable “Physical Health” was significant in relation to middle school counselors with a significance level of .009. Looking at the means for middle school counselors in the knowledge subsets, these counselors had more knowledge in the subsets “Counseling Issues,” “Professional Identity,” and “Physical health” (see Table 18).

High school counselor participants ($n = 113$) had differences in relation to the other participants. MANOVA results found F (6, 298) = 51.367, $p < .001$. The individual ANOVAs were significant to high school counselors in relation to the dependent variable “Counseling Issues” with a significance level of $p < .001$ and to the dependent variable “School to Work” with a significance level of $p < .001$ (see Table 19). Looking at the means, high school counselors had more knowledge in the subset “School to Work” than other school counselors. However, the means show that high school counselors had less

knowledge in the subset “Counseling Issues” than those who are not high school counselors (see Table 20).

Ratio relations. The ratio of students to school counselor had significant differences in relation to the knowledge subsets, F (6, 298) = 1.679, $p < .001$. Individual ANOVAS were run and was significant in the “School to Work” subset with a significance level of $p < .001$ (see Table 21).

According to the means statistics, the knowledge base of “School to Work” decreased as the ratio of students to school counselor increased (see Table 22). In order to compare the knowledge subsets by the ratios of 350 or less, 351–500, or 501 or more, multiple comparisons of Post Hoc Tests were completed (Table 23). The dependent variable School to Work had a mean difference that was significant at the .05 level between “350 or less” and “501 or more” as $p < .001$. The dependent variable School to Work also had a mean difference that was significant at the .05 level between “350-500” and “501 or more” as $p < .001$. School counselors with smaller ratios of students (350 or less and 350–500) had more “School to Work” knowledge.

Specific knowledge. One of the primary goals of the research study was to understand what specific knowledge is needed by school counselors to complete their job tasks effectively. The data analysis uncovered knowledge bases school counselor participants described as have knowledge in and in which knowledge bases school counselors need more knowledge.

The highest need for knowledge found throughout the subsets was in the “Counseling Issues” subset, 16.7% (n = 51) of the school counselors wanted more knowledge in the area “Selective Mutism,” whereas 14% (n = 43) had no need for

knowledge in the area. Of the school counselors, 13.8% (*n* = 42) needed more knowledge in the area "Bibliotherapy," and 10% (*n* = 31) had no need for knowledge in "Bibliotherapy." Of the school counselors, 10.8% (*n* = 33) wanted more knowledge in the area "Sociopathology" and 7.5% (*n* = 23) had no need for the knowledge. In the area "Play Therapy," 9.2% (*n* = 28) of the school counselors needed more knowledge and 9.2% (*n* = 28) had no need for this knowledge. Of the school counselors, 8.9% (*n* = 27) wanted more knowledge in the area "DSM Diagnoses," 7.5% (*n* = 20) had no need for knowledge with "DSM Diagnoses," and 7.5% (*n* = 23) of the school counselors wanted more knowledge in the area "Relaxation/Imagery," and 3.9% (*n* = 12) had no need for the knowledge.

The second highest need for knowledge was found in subset "Professional Identity" with 13.4% (*n* = 41) of the school counselors needing more knowledge regarding "Full Service Schools" while 6.6% (*n* = 20) of the school counselors had no need for knowledge in this area. In the "Physical Health" subset, 16.7% (*n* = 27) of the school counselors needed more knowledge in the area "Medications/Psychopharmacology" and 3.6% (*n* = 11) had no need for knowledge in this subset.

In Table 24, the "School to Work" subset had more than 10% of the school counselors with no knowledge and wanted knowledge or did not need the knowledge in a multiple of knowledge bases including "Military Options," "Scholarships," "Financial Aid," "GED programs/options," "Job Training/Opportunities," and "FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid)." Of the school counselors, 9.2% needed more knowledge in the area "Military Options." However, the data of only the high school

counselors' need for knowledge under "Military Options" was .9% (see Table 25). This means 1 of 113 high school counselors needed knowledge regarding "Military Options." Otherwise, 100% of the high school counselors had knowledge in all of the other knowledge bases in the "School to Work" subset.

Additional responses. At the end of the survey, the school counselors also had the opportunity to disclose any information about knowledge in any area and level of knowledge not specified in the survey. Responses from the school counselors included:

- Reading expert
- Deafness/hearing loss
- Grief/loss
- Gang activity and identification
- Knowledgeable on sub-cultures within the school.

For a comprehensive list of responses, see Appendix F.

The School Counselor Activity Rating Scale

The results from the School Counselor Activity Rating Scale (SCARS) provided a variety of scores including a total intervention score, actual subscale scores, preferred subscale scores, an actual total intervention score, preferred total intervention score, and scores from the non-guidance subscales (clerical, fair share, administrative). Data were obtained for four intervention subscales and three non-guidance subscales. However, some were lost during the data collection process. Two pages of questions under coordination subscale were lost (Table 26). This loss skewed the total intervention scores and the coordination subscale scores.

The data analysis on the SCARS section of the research project indicated preferences for performing activities reflective of a comprehensive, developmental school counseling program. The means, standard deviations, and *t*-test results are presented in Table 27, $t = 8.203$, *df* .304 and $p < .001$.

Paired samples *t*-tests were performed on all four intervention subscales. The non-guidance activities were separated into a clerical subscale, a fair share subscale, and an administrative subscale and paired samples *t*-tests were performed on the subscales. Significant differences were found between all of the actual and preferred intervention subscales and all of the non-guidance subscales.

The biggest discrepancy was found between actual and preferred activities in the non-guidance activities subscales. For the non-guidance subscales, the total actual mean score was 3.10, and the total preferred mean score was 2.4. The clerical and the fair share subscale had the largest discrepancies under the non-guidance subscales. The clerical subscale had an actual mean of 3.34 and a preferred mean of 2.62. The fair share subscale had an actual mean of 3.42 and a preferred mean of 2.72. The non-guidance subscales and items are presented in Table 28 with the means and standard deviations.

The second largest discrepancy was found between actual and preferred scores in the counseling activities subscale. The counseling activities subscale had an actual mean of 3.39 and a preferred mean of 3.89. The subscale items are presented with their means and standard deviations in each specific subscale of Curriculum (Table 29), Coordination (Table 30), Counseling (Table 31), and Consultation (Table 32).

Internal reliability of the School Counselor Activity Scale was determined using Cronbach's alpha statistics. Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient usually increases

when the correlations between the items increase. Reliability is considered good if Cronbach's alpha coefficient value is greater than .7. All of the subscales had high reliability coefficients except for the coordination subscale, the fair share subscale, and the administrative subscale (see Table 33).

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

Discussion of Results

Need for knowledge. Overall, findings provided specific information on the levels of knowledge school counselors have in certain topic areas. Most school counselors were in the "knowledgeable" to the "limited knowledge" range regarding most of the knowledge bases.

The school counselors identified some knowledge bases in which there was a need for more knowledge and some knowledge bases in which there was no need for the knowledge. There is a definite need for more knowledge in regards to selective mutism, bibliotherapy, sociopathology, play therapy, DSM diagnoses, relaxation/imagery, and medications/psychopharmacology. These knowledge bases were included under the subset of counseling issues in this study. It is imperative that these specific knowledge areas get more attention in the counselor education programs.

The need for knowledge was more specific with the "School to Work" subset items. The high school counselors were knowledgeable in this area, and school counselors providing services for lower grades were not as knowledgeable in this area. A future question to be asked is: Did the school counselors gain the "School to Work" knowledge through their education and "lost" the knowledge because of nonuse, or did high school counselors obtain the "school to work" knowledge because they are working within a specific system of students who are preparing to enter the workforce?

Full Service Schools is another specific area in which school counselors wanted more knowledge. Full Service Schools can meet the basic needs of students so they have

more opportunity to learn. Maslow's hierarchy of needs is a theory based on the assumption that all people have the desire to maximize their potential and strive to do what they are capable of doing and psychologists, sociologists, educators and other stakeholders can use the hierarchy in their professions to understand how a person chooses to act (Jones, 1992, ¶ 2). If a student's basic needs are met, the student can be expected to learn. This requires the school counselor to be aware of community resources available to assist students and families. The school counselor can play a pivotal role in obtaining and providing services to clients to ensure that the basic needs of people are being met.

Counselor educators can incorporate the Full Service Schools model into counseling programs. Within the model, the school counselor must work as both a team member and a team leader to ensure that all students have the opportunity for healthy development in the academic, career, personal, and social arenas in their life. Full Service Schools can provide comprehensive services to fulfill the students', parents', and teachers' needs.

In a shift to viewing the school, family, and student within the community as a system, all must adapt and collaborate to create a positive, balanced system. A Full Service School is a great example of such a system in which the community, school, families and students work together to meet the needs of all. According to Kronick (2002, Back Cover), a Full Service School is a school that serves as a central point of delivery, a single community hub for whatever education, health, social, human, or employment services have been determined locally to be needed to support a child's success in school and in the community

Counselor educators can educate school counselors on how to utilize the resources of the community. Utilizing resources will enable school counselors to spend more time on job-related activities that are preferred and appropriate for the student population.

Knowledge and demographics. The school counselor's primary goal is to meet the needs of the client. In the school, the client population includes the students, parents, teachers, and other stakeholders in the school system. Times are changing, needs are changing, and some needs are not being met. This research study provided information on the knowledge base needs of school counselors in relation to demographic variables.

Areas of knowledge were defined differently in the communities. The knowledge of the school counselors was different depending on whether the school counselor was in a rural, suburban, or urban area. School counselors in rural areas of Tennessee had more knowledge in issues relating to physical health and school to work than school counselors working in the suburban areas of Tennessee. "Physical Health" issues may be more of a concern in rural areas because the topic included knowledge bases in which rural communities may have fewer resources. Also, it may be possible that school counselors are more concerned about the opportunities available for students after school in the rural areas because they are less available in the local community.

The results showed large differences in the populations served by Tennessee school counselors. A school counselor completing a training program must be prepared to deal with a variety of developmental stages of students. If a school counselor has to provide services for four schools, responsive services are very limited. If a school counselor must provide services to students in pre-k through 12th, the school counselor

must be knowledgeable of all of the developmental stages of students and the issues that come within each stage.

The results of this study showed that school counselors' knowledge areas were relative to the grades that they serviced; this implies that school counselors obtained or increased the knowledge needed to work with students at a certain developmental stage in the work setting after the school counselors completed their educational training. Whereas elementary and middle school counselors had more knowledge in "Counseling Issues," middle school counselors were more knowledgeable in "Professional Identity" and "Physical Health" issues. High school counselors were the most knowledgeable in "School to Work." These issues may be related to the students because of the developmental stage of the students. For example, middle school counselors may be more concerned about physical health issues because students are entering the stage of puberty. High school counselors are more knowledgeable about "School to Work" issues because high school students are entering the world of work.

Ratios of students did not seem to have a major effect on the knowledge of the school counselors except in the "School to Work" subset. The results indicated that the higher ratios decreased the knowledge school counselors needed for "School to Work" issues. School counselors with high ratios of students may not have the chance to invest in opportunities for students beyond school. Services will be different if a school counselor is working with 100 students versus a school counselor serving 1,000 students.

School counselors are expected to be available to assist all students. If a school counselor works 50 hours a week (with no breaks), one could break down services to equal 30 minutes per student if there were 100 students at the school. Yet, if there were

1,000 students at a school, the school counselor could provide 3 minutes a week per student. In the state of Tennessee, students are not receiving an equal amount of services from the school counselors.

The State Department of Education, the counties, and the school systems need to become more aligned with the appropriate ratios recommended by the ASCA and the Tennessee Basic Education Program (BEP). Tennessee BEP recommends that elementary school counselors of grades kindergarten thru 6th have a ratio of 1:500, and secondary school counselors of grades 7th through 12th are recommended to have a ratio of 1:350 (Tennessee Department of Education, 2005, p. 16). ASCA recommends a ratio of 1:250 or less (ASCA, 2005, p. 68). If appropriate ratios are critical for success, then school counselors must question if they are being set up for failure with very high ratios of students to assist. Only 6.2% of the research participants met the requirements of ASCA's ratio recommendations.

The school counselor participants in this research study provided additional information on the knowledge they had that was not specified in the survey (see Appendix F). These responses supported the face validity of the survey. The responses provided additional areas of knowledge school counselors in the state of Tennessee. These additional areas of knowledge were very diverse and interesting, and they supplemented the roles and functions of the school counselors.

Last, school counselors' knowledge bases differed by demographic variables except there were no significant differences found between school counselors who worked at a Title I school and school counselors who did not work at a Title I school. This in itself is significant. Title I schools receive federal monies to provide services to

students who are disadvantaged. Title I programs have goals that include improving student achievement and creating strategies to support parental involvement. These goals are similar to the goals of the school counselors.

According to the U.S. Department of Education, "the purpose of this title is to ensure that all children have a fair, equal, and significant opportunity to obtain a high-quality education and reach, at a minimum, proficiency on challenging State academic achievement standards and state academic assessments" (2007, ¶ 5). It would appear that school counselors in Title I schools would have increased knowledge in areas related to Title I, yet they do not (e.g., the No Child Left Behind Act). One possibility is that school counselors in Title I schools may not be involved in the Title I programs utilized in the school systems.

School Counselor Activity Rating Scale preferred activities. School counselors in the state of Tennessee have differences in what they are actually doing and what they would prefer to be doing. The findings support the notion that school counselors preferred to do activities that are aligned with the best practices of a comprehensive, developmental school counseling program. This study showed that school counselors are not spending their time as they would prefer to. Also, school counselors are doing more activities that are considered inappropriate than they would prefer to do. The findings of this research study support previous research efforts that utilized the School Counselor Activity Rating Scale (SCARS) and had similar findings (Scarborough, 2005; Scarborough & Culbreth, 2006).

The reliability of the scales was of concern because there was missing data that affected the coordination scale scores. The coordination scale had lower reliability than

the other subscales because of the missing data, yet the reliability was still comparatively high. In an analysis by Scarborough (2005), the Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients for the coordination subscale were .84 for Actual and .85 for Prefer. In the current study, the Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients for the coordination subscale were .66 for Actual and .70 for Prefer.

The fair share subscale had low reliability. The items of the fair share subscale varied widely and could be interpreted differently by the school counselors, thereby reducing the reliability of the scores on the scale. The administrative subscale did not contain many items and, therefore, reliability was limited. However, the reliability coefficients for theses scales and the other scales were similar or higher to the reliability coefficients for the same scales in a study completed by Scarborough (2005).

The SCARS was a very useful instrument in this research study, and the data were easy to analyze. The SCARS provided data that showed the differences of school counselors' actual and preferred job activities. It is necessary to understand the discrepancy with current, concrete data between what school counselors actually do and what school counselors prefer to do. Tennessee school counselors, counselor educators, and other important stakeholders can gain more awareness of these discrepancies and work toward solutions.

Limitations

Using the Internet to assist in this research study created many limitations in completing this research study. A limitation of using the Internet was that many of the participants were unable to complete the survey because the survey timed out before the survey was completed. Timed outs are when the participant opens the survey and at some

point during the process closed the browser window or the browser window closed because a window was open too long. A person can set the timer on a computer for how long a browser window will stay open. Perhaps a school counselor started the survey, had to leave the computer, and, when they returned, the page had expired. In regards to this research study,

> "a timeout is when someone voluntarily closes their browser due to their decision to quit. The session stays active on our server for 5 minutes and then times out. The name Timed Out is a little misleading since many people interpret that the session times out on the respondent not allowing them to proceed. However it is actually the other way around. If a person has a survey open in their browser it will stay open and active as long as they do not close the browser window." (C. Springer, personal communication, December 7, 2006)

However, a person or an organization also can program a specific timeout on a computer system. Also, after the third reminder, some participants were unable to connect to the site (the site was unavailable) and the survey had to be rebooted.

Several potential limitations are important to think of when interpreting the results of this study. First, the sample consists of school counselors who responded to e-mail and were willing to participate in research surveys. School counselors who responded may have different characteristics than non-participants. Second, generalization is limited to the specified accessible population: Tennessee state public school counselors.

Only school counselors with accessible e-mails received the survey. This was a concern. For example, the primary investigator of this research study herself was a school counselor in the state of Tennessee and did not receive the survey via e-mail. Although

the primary investigator had been a school counselor in the state of Tennessee for 7 years, the state department did not have her e-mail on the list of school counselors in the state of Tennessee (even though there had been e-mail communication between the state department and her).

Also, a request was sent out to the counseling supervisors of each county to please forward the survey to all school counselors in their county. Only one counseling supervisor in the state of Tennessee requested additional information regarding the research study. The counseling supervisor in the primary investigator's county did not forward the survey to her as a school counselor or to any other school counselors in the county. The support for research within the profession appeared to be limited. Counseling supervisors may have been unresponsive because they had no incentive, had other priorities, did not have e-mail access to school counselors or they could have been responsive and the school counselors in the area were unresponsive.

Another limitation of this study was the limited database of the state department of Tennessee of school counselor personnel. According to Nicole Cobb, the state department is in the process of updating the database (Personal communication, September 30, 2006, SMCA Conference). This situation facilitates the difficulty of communication between local and state agencies. This is a hindrance in the development of the school counseling roles and school counseling program development and implementation. This situation has allowed leadership, advocacy, and reform within the school counseling communities and systems within the state of Tennessee to idle. After the Tennessee Department of Education updates and completes the school counselors' database, then communication, teamwork, and networking will increase and facilitate

growth, support and development of the school counselors and the school counseling programs in the state of Tennessee.

Strengths

The Internet provided much strength in assisting with this research study. The Internet was utilized to send the survey to the participants and also allowed the data to be collected in a format that could be converted to statistics utilizing the SPSS program. Sending the survey by e-mail saved time and the expense of paper and postage. The participants were able to complete the survey online at their convenience and in privacy.

The most important strength of this research study is specific information was obtained about a specific professional identity: the school counselors in the public schools of Tennessee. The knowledge gained from this research study can be applied toward Tennessee school counseling programs and the professional school counselor identity formation and reformation.

Knowledge was gained that can help counselor educators increase the focus on areas of knowledge that school counselors need. Counselor educators, school counselors, and other important stakeholders have the opportunity to obtain specific data and awareness about areas in which school counselors perceive they have no need for the knowledge.

Implications

Times will continue to change. Therefore, continual research is needed to understand changing roles. The school counselors' roles are evolving with the changes in our societies and systems and have yet to come to the optimum level of utilization. The school counselor's role will continually change and adapt. However, in many cases a

school counselor cannot fulfill all of the responsibilities and job functions put forth in a guidance program. Many counselors have an ever-increasing population. Most schools have a high ratio of students to a school counselor. Some schools only have a school counselor part time, and this school counselor may be working at the "other" school and not be available for crisis situations.

Increased teamwork is required to utilize our resources more efficiently while increasing resources to all of the students. Although past research has shown different results concerning the effect of the caseload on the school counselor, research needs to look at the effects the caseload has on the students. The students', parents', and other professionals' perspectives need to be obtained to understand if they believe the school counselor is working effectively to meet the needs of all the students. From the school counselors' perspectives, they are doing all they can. Is that enough?

Staley and Carey (1997) recommend that school counselors communicate with counselor educators about curriculum areas that could be strengthened to prepare school counselors to meet current demands for facilitating career and life skills development in the schools. Counselor educators need to continue to work on the professional development of counselors in training. Counselor educations must keep abreast of societal and school needs. It is important to maintain and update the skills and knowledge needed to prepare school counselors for the reality of the role within the school system.

Defining the school counselors' role can increase important efficiency and task completion. There is a strong need for evidence-based research on the efficacy of professional school counseling and school counseling programs. Defining the school counselor role can be done through school policies, pamphlets, professional development,

parent conferences, newsletters, and word of mouth. Involving key people (administrators, teachers, and parents) in the development and implementation of a school counseling program allows them to see firsthand the importance and focus of school counselors' roles.

School counselors must rethink their views about what their work functions should be and how their relations with students, parents, teachers, principals, community members, etc. should be structured and balanced. School counselors and counselor educators must take a more active role in enforcing appropriate functions of school counselors. Finally, more effort should be directed to informing educators and communities of comprehensive, developmental school counseling programs and the roles and functions of the school counselors. Awareness of appropriate role functions of school counselors are needed for administrators, school officials, teachers, parents, community members, policy makers, and, most importantly, the students.

Future Research Recommendations

There is a cry for more research in this arena. The need for and the importance of accountability for outcomes has been stressed in every decade since the 1920s (Gysbers & Henderson, 2005). In 1983, Stockton and Hulse wrote, "The field of school counseling cannot advance if the profession does not assume responsibility for professional inquiry" (p. 304).

Deck and Cecil (1990) acknowledged that many counselor educators and field supervisors, especially those working with school counselors, have themselves conducted little research. These same perspectives are being heard throughout the school counseling profession today (American School Counselor Association [ASCA], 2005; Dahir &

Stone, 2003; Gysbers & Henderson, 2005; Isaacs, 2003; Johnson & Johnson, 2003; Myrick, 2003).

It is important to broaden the awareness of the relationship roles between the education system and the dynamics of the school counselor. Collaboration and communications must increase. Roles and relationships need to be recognized and systemically analyzed. Understanding the interdependencies within the system can assist in improving the system. Also, school counselors need to demonstrate how their roles and functions contribute to the overall school environment and to the development of all students. The ongoing collection of data, the gathering of information, and conducting research are critical in determining the effectiveness of school counseling programs, their relationship to the educational agenda, and, ultimately to the survival of the profession (Dahir, 2004, p. 352).

School counselors, counselor educators, and school systems need to collaborate on the definition of the school counselor. Researchers also need to look at the collaborative processes that create effective and ineffective school counseling programs and personnel. Researchers need to look at the option of more specialized preparation of school counselors based upon the setting (i.e., elementary, middle, high) instead of preparing them for a broad scope covering kindergarten through high school.

Future research also should focus on the professional relationships of school counselors. In this research study, the school counselors were not asked if they were affiliated with or had knowledge of any professional organizations such as the American School Counselor Association, Tennessee School Counselor Association, and/or the Education Trust Initiatives. Professional membership and professional development

activities could have an impact on how school counselors perceive their roles and functions and their knowledge levels.

Living in the age of technology with information at our fingertips, everyone is challenged to improve their communication and collaboration skills. Technology is a resource that has not been utilized as it could be to implement change within the school systems and in the research arenas. Researchers need to look at the effects of technology on the school counselors' roles and functions and how technology is utilized by school counselors.

Technology has become a part of our systems. Counselor educators can assist in providing technological tools for school counselors to utilize that can support their roles and functions in the school system. Today's school counselors can employ technology to assist in research and accountability, increase networking and communication within various systems, obtain resources, increase knowledge, and implement, maintain and evaluate the school counseling programs.

School populations will change. The optimum goal would be to understand how to gain a reduction in the differences between actual, preferred, expected, and needed roles of the school counselor. There is no quick fix, and it seems that as the roles change, the systems change. The identity development of the school counselor and the school counseling programs is an evolving process requiring awareness of the conditions that are constantly changing and affecting the school and the systems. Future research needs to look at the factors that may be predictive of the discrepancies in the identity, roles and functions of the school counselors.

This research project was conducted on a state level. More research is needed in relation to comprehensive school counseling programs. Are they working? The researcher looked at the role of school counselors in the state of Tennessee. Dr. Scarborough also completed research in two other states. Research needs to be completed on a national level also. National research on school counselors is needed to understand the knowledge bases and the actual and preferred activities of school counselors in a variety of settings and locations. It is also important to examine if and how school counselors are utilized in the educational systems in other countries.

Summation

School counselors are to be commended for the work they accomplish with so many students and so few resources. School counselors should be acknowledged for the wide variety of work roles and functions they accomplish in a day, every day. School counselors should be applauded for the breadth of knowledge they need to know in order to accomplish the roles and functions required of them.

This research study provides information that can be beneficial to many stakeholders in the educational arena including school counselors, administrators, teachers, and the students in the school systems. Most important, this research study provides an impetus for counselor educators to adapt university and college programs to the needs of future and current school counselors.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

E-mail to School Counselors.

Dear School Counselor,

Win a $50.00 gift certificate from Amazon.com! Research is important in this area so please help. You are asked to participate in a research study "Tennessee State Public School Counselors' Time, Tasks, and Knowledge conducted by Laura Hebert.

For research study, click on:

http://survey.utk.edu/mrIWeb/mrIWeb.dll?I.Project=TENNESSEESTATEPU

I, Laura Hebert, am a counselor education doctoral student in the Department of Educational P Psychology & Counseling in the College of Education, Health, and Human Sciences at the University of Tennessee. I am the contact person and the principal investigator in this research project.

Your participation in this research project is completely voluntary. You should read the information and ask any questions about anything you do not understand before deciding whether or not to participate. You can contact me at lhebert@utk.edu.

The anticipated benefits of the research study will be increasing the knowledge of

counselor educators as to what knowledge would be beneficial to school counselors and students in future programs of study.

The results of the research project will be more valid and reliable if all of the materials are completed.

Also, to promote a higher return rate, four $50.00 gift certificates for Amazon.com will be offered in a drawing if the participant wants to return their e-mail address with the forms. These e-mail addresses will not be used in the research project and will be destroyed after the drawing.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation,

Laura Hebert, Ed.S.

University of Tennessee

Knoxville, TN 37996

(865) 577-5970

lhebert@utk.edu

E-mail to Counseling Supervisors.

Dear Counseling Supervisor,

Research is important in the school counseling arena, so please help. **School counselors in your county could win a $50.00 gift certificate from Amazon.com!** You are asked to forward this research study to all school counselors in your county. School counselors can participate in a research study "*Tennessee State Public School Counselors' Time, Tasks, and Knowledge*" conducted by Laura Hebert. The State Department of Tennessee has given permission to utilize the school counselors' e-mails to complete this research study (Documentation available upon request). However, the database is limited and therefore access to school counselors is limited. The anticipated benefits of the research study will be increasing the knowledge of counselor educators and school counselors as to what knowledge would be beneficial to school counselors and students in future programs of study in the state of Tennessee.

For research study, click on:

http://survey.utk.edu/mrIWeb/mrIWeb.dll?I.Project=TENNESSEESTATEPU

I, Laura Hebert, am a counselor education doctoral student in the Department of Educational Psychology & Counseling in the College of Education, Health, and Human Sciences at the University of Tennessee. I am the contact person and the principal investigator in this research project.

Participation in this research project is completely voluntary. Please read the information and ask any questions about anything you do not understand before deciding whether or not to forward the research survey. You can contact me at lhebert@utk.edu.

As part of the research project, the school counselors and you will receive:

- Information regarding the research project,
- Informed Consent Procedures,
- The School Counselor Activity Rating Scale,
- Tennessee State Public School Counselors' Knowledge Survey
- Demographic Data Sheet

The results of the research project will be more valid and reliable if all of the materials are completed by all of the school counselors possible in the state of Tennessee.

Also, to promote a higher return rate, four $50.00 gift certificates for Amazon.com will be offered in a drawing if the school counselor wants to return their e-mail address with the forms. These e-mail addresses will not be used in the research project and will be destroyed after the drawing.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation,

Laura Hebert, Ed.S.

University of Tennessee

Knoxville, TN 37996

(865) 577-5970

lhebert@utk.edu

Appendix B

E-mail Presentation of Informed Consent and Information.

Tennessee State Public School Counselors' Time, Tasks, and Knowledge

This is a dissertation research study. You have been asked to participate in this research study because you are a school counselor at a Tennessee public school. Your participation in this research project is completely voluntary. In appreciation of your participation, you will be eligible to enter into a drawing for one of four $50 gift certificates upon completing the questionnaire.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The first objective of this project is measure how Tennessee public school counselors actually spend their time and how they would prefer to spend their time in job-related activities. The second objective of this project is to assess the areas of knowledge Tennessee public school counselors have and need to complete their job-related activities.

PROCEDURES

Your completion and submission of the assessment, survey and demographic data sheet are your consent to voluntarily participate in this research study. It will take you approximately 45 minutes to complete the forms. When you have finished, please submit them via e-mail to the identified contact person. You are entitled to the aggregate results of the study. However, no individual results will be made available due to the need to

protect the confidentiality of you and the participants. All information will be kept locked and secured. I, Laura Hebert, will be the only person with access. Upon completion of the research project, the data will be kept for two years and then destroyed.

POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORT

The potential risks of participating in this research study are minimal. Results are confidential.

ANTICIPATED BENEFITS TO SUBJECTS

You should not expect to benefit directly from participation in this research study. You do have the right to refuse participation. However, you could win a gift certificate for participating in the research study. Four gift certificates will be offered in a drawing if the participant wants to return their e-mail address with the forms. These e-mail addresses will not be used in the research project and will be destroyed after the drawing. The anticipated benefits of the research study will be increasing the knowledge of counselor educators as to what knowledge would be beneficial to school counselors and students in future programs of study.

ALTERNATIVES TO PARTICIPATION

Your participation is voluntary. If you choose to not participate you will not be asked to identify yourself. You have the opportunity to choose to not participate in the project without negative consequences.

PAYMENT FOR PARTICIPATION

No financial compensation will be available to participants. There are no financial obligations for participating in the study.

FINANCIAL OBLIGATIONS

You will not be billed for completion of the forms. Also, you will not be expected to make any financial payment to obtain the aggregate results.

PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY

No information about you, or provided by you during the research, will be disclosed to others without your written permission, except (a) if necessary to protect our rights or welfare or (b) if required by law. When the results of the research are published or discussed in conferences, no information will be included that would reveal your identity. The primary investigator will maintain all materials in a locked and secured area when items are not being analyzed. When in use, data will be inaccessible to other's view.

PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

Participation in this study is voluntary and participants may decide to not participate in the study. Withdrawal from the study may occur at anytime prior to the submission of completed results.

WITHDRAWAL OF PARTICIPATION DATA BY THE INVESTIGATOR

The primary investigator may omit results of participants who do not meet the inclusion criteria or fail to complete the forms.

IDENTIFICATION OF INVESTIGATORS

While the potential risks of participating in this study are minimal, any injuries or adverse reactions related to participation should be reported immediately to the primary investigator or Chairperson listed below. If you have any questions about the research project, please contact the principal investigator, in order to maintain confidentiality. The primary investigator and their dissertation chair are listed below:

Primary Investigator: Laura Hebert

Chair: Dr. R. F. Kronick

450 Claxton Complex

1122 Volunteer Boulevard

The University of Tennessee

Knoxville, TN 37996-3400

L. Hebert: (865) 577-5970

Dr. R. F. Kronick: (865) 974-8799

RIGHTS OF RESEARCH SUBJECTS

You may withdraw your consent any time prior to completing and returning the forms. There are no penalties for discontinuation of participation. You are not waiving any legal claims, rights, or remedies because of your participation in this research project.

SIGNATURE

Your signature is not necessary as your completion and submission of the research forms provides acknowledgement of informed consent.

Appendix C

State Department Access Letter to E-mails.

PHIL BREDESEN
GOVERNOR

STATE OF TENNESSEE
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
6TH FLOOR, ANDREW JOHNSON TOWER
710 JAMES ROBERTSON PARKWAY
NASHVILLE, TN 37243-0375

LANA C. SEIVERS, Ed.D.
COMMISSIONER

To: Dr. R.F. Kronick
Brenda Lawson

From: Nicole Cobb
Tennessee Department of Education
Director of School Counseling

Date: August 11, 2006

Re: Laura Hebert Research Project

The Tennessee Department of Education agrees to release names, school addresses, and school emails of all school counselors employed in the state of Tennessee for the purpose of Laura Herbert's research project.

Appendix D

E-mail Presentation to Participants of Scale, Survey and Demographics.

Indicate the frequency with which you **ACTUALLY** perform each counseling activity.

	I never do this	I rarely do this	I occasionally do this	I frequently do this	I routinely do this
Counsel with students regarding personal/family concerns	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Counsel with students regarding school behavior	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Counsel students regarding crisis/emergency issues	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Counsel students regarding relationships (e.g., family, friends, romantic)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Provide small group counseling addressing relationship/social skills	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Provide small group counseling for academic issues	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Conduct small groups regarding family/personal issues (e.g., divorce, death)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Conduct small group counseling for students regarding substance abuse issues (own use or family/friend use)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Follow-up on individual and group counseling participants	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Counsel students regarding academic issues	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Scarborough, J. L. (2005). The School Counselor Activity Rating Scale: An instrument for gathering process data. *Professional School Counseling*, 8,3. P. 274-283.

Previous Next

Indicate the frequency with which you **PREFER** to perform each counseling activity.

	I would prefer to never do this	I would prefer to rarely do this	I would prefer to occasionally do this	I would prefer to frequently do this	I would prefer routinely do this
Counsel with students regarding personal/family concerns	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Counsel with students regarding school behavior	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Counsel students regarding crisis/emergency issues	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Counsel students regarding relationships (e.g., family, friends, romantic)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Provide small group counseling addressing relationship/social skills	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Provide small group counseling for academic issues	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Conduct small groups regarding family/personal issues (e.g., divorce, death)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Conduct small group counseling for students regarding substance abuse issues (own use or family/friend use)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Follow-up on individual and group counseling participants	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Counsel students regarding academic issues	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Scarborough, J. L. (2005). The School Counselor Activity Rating Scale: An instrument for gathering process data. *Professional School Counseling*, 8,3. P. 274-283.

Previous Next

Indicate the frequency with which you **ACTUALLY** perform each consultation activity.

	I never do this	I rarely do this	I occasionally do this	I frequently do this	I routinely do this
Consult with school staff concerning student behavior	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Consult with community and school agencies concerning individual students	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Consult with parents regarding child/adolescent developmental issues	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Coordinate referrals for students and/or families to community or education professionals (e.g., mental health, speech pathology, medical assessment)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Assist in identifying exceptional children (special education)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Provide consultation for administrators (regarding school policy, programs, staff and/or students)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Participate in team/grade level/subject team meetings	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Scarborough, J. L. (2005). The School Counselor Activity Rating Scale: An instrument for gathering process data. *Professional School Counseling*, 8,3. P. 274-283.

Previous Next

Indicate the frequency with which you **PREFER** to perform each consultation activity.

	I would prefer to never do this	I would prefer to rarely do this	I would prefer to occasionally do this	I would prefer to frequently do this	I would prefer routinely do this
Consult with school staff concerning student behavior	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Consult with community and school agencies concerning individual students	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Consult with parents regarding child/adolescent developmental issues	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Coordinate referrals for students and/or families to community or education professionals (e.g., mental health, speech pathology, medical assessment)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Assist in identifying exceptional children (special education)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Provide consultation for administrators (regarding school policy, programs, staff and/or students)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Participate in team/grade level/subject team meetings	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Scarborough, J. L. (2005). The School Counselor Activity Rating Scale: An instrument for gathering process data. *Professional School Counseling*, 8,3. P. 274-283.

Previous Next

Indicate the frequency with which you **ACTUALLY** perform each curriculum activity.

	I never do this	I rarely do this	I occasionally do this	I frequently do this	I routinely do this
Conduct classroom activities to introduce yourself and explain the counseling program to all students	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Conduct classroom lessons addressing career development and the world of work	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Conduct classroom lessons on various personal and/or social traits (e.g., responsibility, respect, etc.)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Conduct classroom lessons on relating to others (family, friends)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Conduct classroom lessons on personal growth and developmental issues	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Conduct classroom lessons on conflict resolution	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Conduct classroom lessons regarding substance abuse	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Conduct classroom lessons on personal safety issues	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Scarborough, J. L. (2005). The School Counselor Activity Rating Scale: An instrument for gathering process data. *Professional School Counseling*, 8,3. P. 274-283.

Previous Next

Indicate the frequency with which you **PREFER** to perform each curriculum activity.

	I would prefer to never do this	I would prefer to rarely do this	I would prefer to occasionally do this	I would prefer to frequently do this	I would prefer routinely do this
Conduct classroom activities to introduce yourself and explain the counseling program to all students	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Conduct classroom lessons addressing career development and the world of work	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Conduct classroom lessons on various personal and/or social traits (e.g., responsibility, respect, etc.)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Conduct classroom lessons on personal growth and developmental issues	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Conduct classroom lessons on conflict resolution	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Conduct classroom lessons regarding substance abuse	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Conduct classroom lessons on personal safety issues	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Conduct classroom lessons on relating to others (family, friends)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Scarborough, J. L. (2005). The School Counselor Activity Rating Scale: An instrument for gathering process data. *Professional School Counseling*, 8,3. P. 274-283.

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Indicate the frequency with which you **ACTUALLY** perform each coordination activity.

	I never do this	I rarely do this	I occasionally do this	I frequently do this	I routinely do this
Coordinate special events and programs for school around academic, career, or personal/social issues (e.g., career day, drug awareness week, test prep)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Coordinate and maintain a comprehensive school counseling program	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Inform parents about the role, training, program, and interventions of a school counselor within the context of your school	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Conduct or coordinate parent education classes or workshops	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Coordinate school-wide response for crisis management and intervention	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Inform teachers/administrators about the role, training, program, and interventions of a school counselor within the context of your school	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Conduct or coordinate teacher in-service programs	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Keep track of how time is being spent on the functions that you perform	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Attend professional development activities (e.g., state conferences, local in-services)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Scarborough, J. L. (2005). The School Counselor Activity Rating Scale: An instrument for gathering process data. *Professional School Counseling*, 8,3. P. 274-283.

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Indicate the frequency with which you **PREFER** to perform each coordination activity.

	I would prefer to never do this	I would prefer to rarely do this	I would prefer to occasionally do this	I would prefer to frequently do this	I would prefer routinely do this
Inform teachers/administrators about the role, training, program, and interventions of a school counselor within the context of your school	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Conduct or coordinate teacher in-service programs	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Keep track of how time is being spent on the functions that you perform	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Attend professional development activities (e.g., state conferences, local in-services)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Coordinate with an advisory team to analyze and respond to school counseling program needs	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Formally evaluate student progress as a result of participation in individual/group counseling from student, teacher and/or parent perspectives	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Conduct needs assessments and counseling program evaluations from parents, faculty and/or students	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Coordinate orientation process/activities for students	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Scarborough, J. L. (2005). The School Counselor Activity Rating Scale: An instrument for gathering process data. *Professional School Counseling*, 8,3. P. 274-283.

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Indicate the frequency with which you **ACTUALLY** perform "other" activities.

	I never do this	I rarely do this	I occasionally do this	I frequently do this	I routinely do this
Participate on committees within the school	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Coordinate the standardized testing program	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Organize outreach to low income families (i.e., Thanksgiving dinners, Holiday families)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Respond to health issues (e.g., check for lice, eye screening, 504 coordination)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Perform hall, bus, cafeteria duty	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Schedule students for classes	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Enroll students in and/or withdraw students from school	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Maintain/Complete educational records/reports (cumulative files, test scores, attendance reports, drop-out reports)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Handle discipline of students	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Substitute teach and/or cover classes for teachers at your school	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Scarborough, J. L. (2005). The School Counselor Activity Rating Scale: An instrument for gathering process data. *Professional School Counseling*, 8,3. P. 274-283.

Previous Next

Indicate the frequency with which you **PREFER** to perform "other" activities.

	I would prefer to never do this	I would prefer to rarely do this	I would prefer to occasionally do this	I would prefer to frequently do this	I would prefer routinely do this
Participate on committees within the school	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Coordinate the standardized testing program	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Organize outreach to low income families (i.e., Thanksgiving dinners, Holiday families)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Respond to health issues (e.g., check for lice, eye screening, 504 coordination)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Perform hall, bus, cafeteria duty	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Schedule students for classes	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Enroll students in and/or withdraw students from school	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Maintain/Complete educational records/reports (cumulative files, test scores, attendance reports, drop-out reports)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Handle discipline of students	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Substitute teach and/or cover classes for teachers at your school	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Scarborough, J. L. (2005). The School Counselor Activity Rating Scale: An instrument for gathering process data. *Professional School Counseling*, 8,3. P. 274-283.

Previous Next

What is your knowledge level?

	Expert	Knowledgeable	Limited knowledge	No knowledge: Need	No knowledge: No need
Counseling Theories	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Counseling Methods	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Group Counseling	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Individual Counseling	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Play Therapy	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Personal/Social Development	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Career Development/Counseling	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Educational Development	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Academic Development	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Motivation	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Previous Next

What is your knowledge level?

	Expert	Knowledgeable	Limited knowledge	No knowledge: Need	No knowlege
Professional Development	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Consultation	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Coordination	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Evaluation	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Supervision	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Educational Reform	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
No Child Left Behind Act	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
IDEA: Individual with Disabilities Act	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Plan 504	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Family Education Rights and Privacy Act	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Previous Next

What is your knowlege level?

	Expert	Knowledgeable	Limited knowledge	No knowledge: Need	No knowledge
Legal and Ethical Issues	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Job requirements	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Licensure/Credentials	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
State Testing	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Bibliotherapy	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Conflict Mediation	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Character Education	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Relaxation/Imagery	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Classroom Management	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Discipline	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Previous Next

What is your knowledge level?

	Expert	Knowledgeable	Limited knowledge	No knowledge: Need	No knowledge
Crisis management	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
School violence	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Bullying	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Trauma & PTSD (post traumatic stress disorder)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Child abuse/neglect	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Full service schools	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Community agencies	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Community resources	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Research	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Etiquette/Manners	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Previous Next

What is your knowledge level?

	Expert	Knowledgeable	Limited knowledge	No knowledge: Need	No knowledge
Social skills / Lifeskills	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Grief	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Self-esteem	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Anger management	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Self-control	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Self-mutilation	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Anxiety	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Eating disorders	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Suicide	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Phobias	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Previous Next

What is your knowledge level?

	Expert	Knowledgeable	Limited knowledge	No knowledge: Need	No knowledge
Gender issues	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Pregnancy	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Sexuality	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Sex education	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Relationships	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Family systems	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Parenting	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Divorce	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Adoption	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Foster children	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Previous Next

What is your knowledge level?

	Expert	Knowledgeable	Limited knowledge	No knowledge: Need	No knowledge
Grandparents as parents	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Family illness	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Physical illness	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Health issues	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Physically Challenges	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Health (community diseases including head lice)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Nutrition	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
AIDS	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
STDs (sexually transmitted diseases)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Drug & Alcohol	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Previous Next

What is your knowledge level?

	Expert	Knowledgeable	Limited knowledge	No knowledge: Need	No knowledge
New students	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Gifted/Talented	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Drop-outs	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Mobility	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Delinquency	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Theories of learning	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Learning skills/techniques	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Learning challenged	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Goal planning	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Study Skills	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Previous Next

What is your knowledge level?

	Expert	Knowledgeable	Limited knowledge	No knowledge: Need	No knowledge
GED programs/options	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Job Training/Opportunities	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Financial Aid	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
(FAFSA: Free Application for Financial Aid)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Scholarships	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Military Options	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Technology	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Internet Safety	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Multiculturalism	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
English Language Learner	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Racism	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Previous Next

What is your knowledge level?

	Expert	Knowledgeable	Limited knowledge	No knowledge: Need	No knowledge
Selective mutism	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Sociopathology	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Emotional disturbances	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
DSM diagnoses	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Assessments	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Medications/ Psychopharmacology	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Religion & Spirituality	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Previous Next

Knowledge in any area not specified? Please explain area and level of knowledge.

Previous Next

What is your gender?

- Female
- Male

Previous | Next

What is the student/counselor ratio at your school? *Enter a whole number for the number of students per counselor.*

Previous | Next

What is your county of employment?

Previous | Next

What is the classification of your school?

- ☐ Rural
- ☐ Suburban
- ☐ Urban
- ☐ Inner-City

Previous | Next

How do you define your ethnicity?

- ☐ Caucasian
- ☐ African American
- ☐ Latino/Hispanic
- ☐ Asian American
- ☐ Native American
- ☐ Other

Previous | Next

Is your school Title One?

- Yes
- No

Previous | Next

What grade levels do you work with?

Previous | Next

What is your current educational level?

- MA/MS
- EdS
- PhD/EdD

Previous | Next

What is your age?

Previous | Next

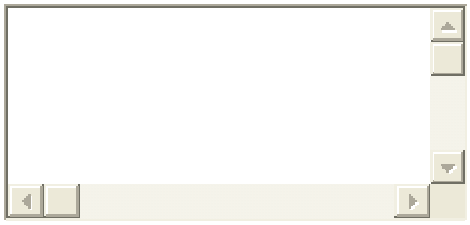
How many years of experience do you have as a school counselor?

- < 5
- 6 - 10
- 11 - 15
- 15 – 20
- 20+

Previous Next

Thank you for your participation.

You are now eligible to enter into the drawing for one of four $50 gift certificates from Amazon.com. If you wish to enter the drawing, please include an e-mail address so we may contact you if you are selected. *E-mail addresses will only be used to notify the winners. They will not be used in conjuction with the data and will be destroyed after the drawing.*



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End of interview. Thank you for your participation.

Appendix E

E-mail reminder to School Counselors and Counseling Supervisors.

This is a reminder.

IMPORTANT:

Please send to all school counselors in your area.

If you started the survey and a time out occurred, please resubmit the survey otherwise it is not valid.

If you completed the survey, please delete this message and thank you very, very much!

Dear School Counselor,

Win a $50.00 gift certificate from Amazon.com! Research is important in this area so please help. You are asked to participate in a research study "Tennessee State Public School Counselors' Time, Tasks, and Knowledge conducted by Laura Hebert.

For research study, click on:

http://survey.utk.edu/mrIWeb/mrIWeb.dll?I.Project=TENNESSEESTATEPU

I, Laura Hebert, am a counselor education doctoral student in the Department of Educational Psychology & Counseling in the College of Education, Health, and Human Sciences at the University of Tennessee. I am the contact person and the principal investigator in this research project.

Your participation in his research project is completely voluntary. You should read the information and ask any questions about anything you do not understand before deciding whether or not to participate. You can contact me at lhebert@utk.edu.

The anticipated benefits of the research study will be increasing the knowledge of counselor educators as to what knowledge would be beneficial to school counselors and students in future programs of study.

The results of the research project will be more valid and reliable if all of the materials are completed.

Also, to promote a higher return rate, four $50.00 gift certificates for Amazon.com will be offered in a drawing if the participant wants to return their e-mail address with the forms. These e-mail addresses will not be used in the research project and will be destroyed after the drawing.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation,

Laura Hebert, Ed.S.
University of Tennessee
Knoxville, TN 37996
(865) 577-5970

Appendix F

Responses from Participants on Knowledge not covered in Survey. At the end of the survey, participants were provided with the opportunity to respond to the question: Knowledge in any area not specified? Please explain area and level of knowledge.

Responses from participants included:

- Reading expert
- Deafness/hearing loss
- Grief/loss
- Gang Activity and Identification
- Knowledgeable on sub-cultures within the school.
- I have a lot of knowledge and experience with creating a master schedule and college applications
- Health and well-being
- Web design and maintenance--I developed and maintain the counseling site for the school. I see that as a little different than just knowledge of technology. Knowledgeable
- Are we, as school counselors, supposed to have knowledge on all of the items listed? There is no way we could address all of these issues with the training that we receive.
- Early intervention options for families; college admissions
- I worked in a community mental health center for about 5 years before I received my masters and started working as a school counselor. I think that experience helped a lot more than any classroom training I obtained.

- Classroom modifications - knowledgeable
- ADHD - expert
- Engineering the environment - knowledgeable
- Appeasing teachers - knowledgeable (let them have their way and don't ever mention something they could do differently to help a child - treat them as an expert in every area and never pressure them to give you information that is critical to helping a child even if there is a deadline imposed by admin. or parents, and on and on and on.)
- Being willing to learn new counseling and teaching methods - expert
- Being treated as a non-professional by teachers - expert
- Lack of support from Principal and Director of Schools - knowledgeable
- Dealing with difficult parents - knowledgeable
- I guess this is all. I hope this research will help improve the role of the Counselor in our schools.
- School database management system: Knowledgeable;
- Counseling and working with CDC (special needs students) and ESL(English as Second Language students).
- Multicultural issues
- Foreign students
- College advising
- I hold a B.S. in Criminal Justice.

- Modifications for special needs students. I prepare a file for each teacher at the beginning of the year to let them know what modifications are needed for each child in their room.
- That was a pretty comprehensive list.
- Lots of experience/knowledge in student and teacher relationships/educational plans/accommodations, etc.
- Yes--too tired to think after all these questions
- School psychology and special education rules and regulation
- What about knowledge in areas of counseling theories and praxis. I prefer to use Solution-Focused counseling most often.

Appendix G

Tables

Wage Tables.

Table 1

Wages & Employment Trends for Educational, Vocational, and School Counselors

Wage/Employment Trend	U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistic
Median wages (2004)	$22.19 hourly, $46,160 annual
Employment (2004)	248,000 employees
Projected growth (2004-2014)	Average (10-20%)
Projected need (2004-2014)	94,000 additional employees

Note. From the U.S. Department of Labor: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (URL: http://www.bls.gov/OES) Division of Occupational Employment Statistics. From the Bureau of Labor Statistics 2004 wage data and 2004-2014 employment projections. "Projected growth" represents the estimated change in total employment over the projections period (2004-2014). "Projected need" represents job openings due to growth and net replacement.

Table 2

National and Tennessee School Counselors' Employment Wages

	Employment[a]	Hourly mean wage	Annual mean wage[b]
National	214,160	23.33	48,530
Tennessee	4,110	19.66	40,890

Note. From the U.S. Department of Labor: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (URL: http://www.bls.gov/OES) Division of Occupational Employment Statistics.

[a]Estimates for detailed occupations do not sum to the totals because the totals include occupations not shown separately. Estimates do not include self-employed workers. [b]Annual wages have been calculated by multiplying the hourly mean wage by 2,080 hours; where an hourly mean wage is not published, the annual wage has been directly calculated from the reported survey data.

Table 3

Tennessee Metropolitan Areas School Counselors' Employment Wages

Area name	Employment[a]	Hourly mean wage	Annual mean wage[b]
Chattanooga, TN-GA	360	19.88	41,350
Clarksville, TN-KY	150	23.96	49,840
Cleveland, TN	40	20.37	42,370
Jackson, TN	60	18.88	39,260
Johnson City, TN	120	17.24	35,870
Kingsport-Bristol-Bristol, TN-VA	180	20.44	42,520
Knoxville, TN	490	15.76	32,790
Memphis, TN-MS-AR	800	21.67	45,070
Morristown, TN	60	16.38	34,070
Nashville-Davidson--Murfreesboro, TN	1300	21.83	45,400

Note. From the U.S. Department of Labor: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics **(**URL: http://www.bls.gov/OES) Division of Occupational Employment Statistics.

[a]Estimates for detailed occupations do not sum to the totals because the totals include occupations not shown separately. Estimates do not include self-employed workers. [b]Annual wages have been calculated by multiplying the hourly mean wage by 2,080 hours; where an hourly mean wage is not published, the annual wage has been directly calculated from the reported survey data.

Demographic Tables.

Table 4

Tennessee County Participation

County	Frequency	Percent	County	Frequency	Percent
Anderson	19	6.2	Loudon	1	.3
Bedford	3	1.0	Macon	2	.7
Benton	2	.7	Madison	4	1.3
Blount	8	2.6	Marion	2	.7
Bradley	3	1.0	Maury	4	1.3
Campbell	3	1.0	McMinn	3	1.0
Cannon	1	.3	Monroe	3	1.0
Carroll	5	1.6	Montgomery	7	2.3
Carter	5	1.6	Morgan	6	2.0
Cheatham	5	1.6	Obion	3	1.0
Chester	3	1.0	Overton	3	1.0
Claiborne	2	.7	Perry	1	.3
Clay	1	.3	Polk	1	.3
Cocke	2	.7	Putnam	1	.3
Crockett	4	1.3	Roane	1	.3
Davidson	15	4.9	Robertson	2	.7
Fentress	4	1.3	Rutherford	22	7.2
Franklin	1	.3	Sevier	9	3.0
Gibson	4	1.3	Shelby	18	5.9
Giles	1	.3	Stewart	3	1.0
Grainger	2	.7	Sullivan	2	.7
Greene	8	2.6	Sumner	2	.7
Hamilton	5	1.6	Tipton	4	1.3
Hawkins	12	3.9	Unicoi	2	.7
Henderson	5	1.6	Van Buren	1	.3
Henry	2	.7	Warren	3	1.0
Houston	1	.3	Washington	10	3.3
Humphreys	2	.7	Weakley	5	1.6
Jackson	3	1.0	Williamson	3	1.0
Jefferson	7	2.3	Wilson	8	2.6
Knox	26	8.5	State school	2	.7
Lake	1	.3			
Lincoln	2	.7			

Table 5

Grade Levels Served by School Counselors

			Grade Category for Data Analysis		
Grades	Frequency	Percent	Elementary	Middle	High
Pre-K	1	.3	YES		
PreK-2nd	1	.3	YES		
PreK-4th	5	1.6	YES		
PreK-5th	10	3.3	YES		
PreK-6th	2	.7	YES	YES	
PreK-8th	11	3.6	YES	YES	
PreK-12th	2	.7	YES	YES	YES
K-1st	2	.7	YES		
K-2nd	6	2.0	YES		
K-3rd	1	.3	YES		
K-4th	13	4.3	YES		
K-5th	38	12.4	YES		
K-6th	1	.3	YES	YES	
K-8th	27	8.9	YES	YES	
K-12th	4	1.3	YES	YES	YES
1st-5th	1	.3	YES		
1st-8th	1	.3	YES	YES	
3rd-5th	3	1.0	YES		
3rd-6th	1	.3	YES		
4th-5th	1	.3		YES	
4th-8th	2	.7		YES	
5th-6th	7	2.3		YES	

Table 5 continued

Grade Levels Served by School Counselors					
			Grade Category for Data Analysis		
Grades	Frequency	Percent	Elementary	Middle	High
5^{th}-8^{th}	9	3.0		YES	
5^{th}-9^{th}	1	.3		YES	
6^{th}-7^{th}	2	.7		YES	
6^{th}-8^{th}	38	12.5		YES	
6^{th}-9^{th}	1	.3		YES	
6^{th}-12^{th}	5	1.6		YES	YES
7^{th}	1	.3		YES	
7^{th}-8^{th}	4	1.3		YES	
7^{th}-9^{th}	1	.3		YES	
7^{th}-12^{th}	5	1.6		YES	YES
8^{th}	1	.3		YES	
8^{th}-12^{th}	2	.7		YES	YES
9^{th}	6	2.0			YES
9^{th}-10^{th}	5	1.6			YES
9^{th}-11^{th}	1	.3			YES
9^{th}-12^{th}	61	20			YES
10^{th}-11^{th}	1	.3			YES
10th-12^{th}	8	2.6			YES
11^{th}	3	1.0			YES
11^{th}-12^{th}	4	1.3			YES
12^{th}	6	2.0			YES
Total	305	100	N=130	N=128	N=113

Knowledge Survey Tables.

Table 6

Student Achievement

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
New students	305	1	4	3.15	.529
Academic Development	304	2	4	3.06	.508
Study Skills	305	2	4	3.04	.482
Educational Development	303	2	4	3.03	.501
Motivation	303	2	4	2.95	.555
Gifted/Talented	305	1	4	2.84	.565
Learning skills/techniques	305	1	4	2.79	.585
Theories of learning	305	1	4	2.75	.606
Learning challenged	305	1	4	2.69	.621
English Language Learner	305	1	4	2.39	.708

Note. 1 = No knowledge (Need and No Need): Minimum, 2 = Limited knowledge, 3 = Knowledgeable, 4 = Expert: Maximum.

Table 7

Systems and Relationships

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Relationships	305	1	4	3.03	.443
Divorce	305	1	4	3.00	.510
Parenting	305	1	4	2.99	.503
Family systems	305	1	4	2.98	.519
Grandparents as parents	305	1	4	2.83	.559
Foster children	305	1	4	2.76	.644
Delinquency	305	1	4	2.74	.568
Adoption	305	1	4	2.66	.660
Mobility	305	1	4	2.60	.652

Note. 1 = No knowledge (Need and No Need): Minimum, 2 = Limited knowledge, 3 = Knowledgeable, 4 = Expert: Maximum.

Table 8

Professional Identity

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Job Requirements	305	1	4	3.16	.557
Individual Counseling	304	2	4	3.14	.481
Coordination	305	1	4	3.02	.547
Counseling Methods	303	2	4	3.00	.419
Licensure/Credentials	305	1	4	2.99	.610
Goal Planning	305	1	4	2.99	.493
State Testing	305	1	4	2.98	.607
Consultation	305	1	4	2.97	.540
Classroom Management	305	1	4	2.97	.697
Professional Development	305	1	4	2.94	.496
Group Counseling	303	2	4	2.93	.507
Counseling Theories	303	2	4	2.93	.432
Legal and Ethical Issues	305	1	4	2.90	.503
Crisis Management	305	1	4	2.88	.546

Note. 1 = No knowledge (Need and No Need): Minimum, 2 = Limited knowledge, 3 = Knowledgeable, 4 = Expert: Maximum.

Table 8 continued

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Discipline	305	1	4	2.85	.688
Plan 504	305	1	4	2.82	.622
Evaluation	305	1	4	2.81	.636
Family Education Rights and Privacy Act	305	1	4	2.81	.648
Community Resources	305	1	4	2.78	.582
Community Agencies	305	1	4	2.77	.562
IDEA: Individuals with Disabilities Act	305	1	4	2.74	.634
Internet Safety	305	1	4	2.70	.696
No Child Left Behind Act	305	1	4	2.70	.583
Supervision	305	1	4	2.66	.700
Technology	305	1	4	2.64	.716
Assessments	305	1	4	2.55	.668
Educational Reform	305	1	4	2.48	.693
Research	305	1	4	2.47	.693
Full Service Schools	305	1	4	2.15	.765

Note. 1 = No knowledge (Need and No Need): Minimum, 2 = Limited knowledge, 3 = Knowledgeable, 4 = Expert: Maximum.

Table 9

Counseling Issues

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Social Skills/Lifeskills	305	2	4	3.17	.448
Self-esteem	305	2	4	3.15	.418
Child abuse/neglect	305	2	4	3.09	.502
Etiquette/Manners	305	1	4	3.06	.493
Self-control	305	1	4	3.06	.476
Anger management	305	1	4	3.06	.541
Personal/Social Development	305	2	4	3.06	.437
Character Education	305	1	4	3.04	.643
Bullying	305	1	4	3.03	.528
Grief	305	2	4	2.97	.519
Drug & Alcohol	305	1	4	2.95	.497
Anxiety	305	1	4	2.92	.507
Racism	305	1	4	2.87	.546
Conflict Mediation	305	1	4	2.87	.642
Suicide	305	2	4	2.85	.499

Note. 1 = No knowledge (Need and No Need): Minimum, 2 = Limited knowledge, 3 = Knowledgeable, 4 = Expert: Maximum.

Table 9 continued

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
School Violence	305	1	4	2.83	.517
Religion & Spirituality	305	1	4	2.80	.621
Multiculturalism	305	1	4	2.76	.628
Eating Disorders	305	1	4	2.66	.613
Gender Issues	305	1	4	2.65	.595
Self-mutilation	305	1	4	2.64	.602
Emotional Disturbances	305	1	4	2.60	.616
Trauma & PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder)	305	1	4	2.50	.660
Phobias	305	1	4	2.49	.608
Play Therapy	305	2	4	2.43	.512
Relaxation/Imagery	305	1	4	2.43	.758
DSM Diagnoses	305	1	4	2.35	.782
Bibliotherapy	305	1	4	2.17	.841
Sociopathology	305	1	4	2.12	.704
Selective Mutism	305	1	4	1.87	.690

Note. 1 = No knowledge (Need and No Need): Minimum, 2 = Limited knowledge, 3 = Knowledgeable, 4 = Expert: Maximum.

Table 10

Physical Health

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Pregnancy	305	1	4	2.90	.614
Family illness	305	1	4	2.84	.541
Physical illness	305	1	4	2.83	.535
Health issues	305	1	4	2.82	.516
Sexuality	305	1	4	2.79	.588
Sex education	305	1	4	2.78	.591
Nutrition	305	1	4	2.78	.602
AIDS	305	1	4	2.74	.515
STDs (sexually transmitted diseases)	305	1	4	2.73	.589
Physically Challenges	305	1	4	2.73	.575
Health (community diseases including head lice)	305	1	4	2.63	.600
Medications/ Psychopharmacology	305	1	4	2.25	.678

Note. 1 = No knowledge (Need and No Need): Minimum, 2 = Limited knowledge, 3 = Knowledgeable, 4 = Expert: Maximum.

Table 11

School to Work

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Career Development/Counseling:	304	2	4	3.00	.548
Drop-outs:	305	1	4	2.68	.654
(FAFSA: Free Application for Financial Aid)	305	1	4	2.68	.863
Financial Aid	305	1	4	2.56	.849
Scholarships	305	1	4	2.52	.866
GED programs/options	305	1	4	2.50	.816
Job Training/Opportunities	305	1	4	2.42	.749
Military Options	305	1	4	2.36	.820

Note. 1 = No knowledge (Need and No Need): Minimum, 2 = Limited knowledge, 3 = Knowledgeable, 4 = Expert: Maximum.

Table 12

Individual ANOVAs for Demographic Classification

Dependent Variable	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Professional Identity	.313	2	.157	1.361	.258
Counseling Issues	.054	2	.027	.260	.771
Relationships	.565	2	.282	1.962	.142
Physical Health	1.116	2	.558	3.793	.024 *
Student Achievement	.009	2	.004	.029	.971
School to Work	4.993	2	2.496	6.354	.002 *

Table 13

Demographic Classification of Knowledge Subset Means

Dependent Variable	Demographic Location	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval Lower Bound	95% Confidence Interval Upper Bound
Physical Health	**Rural**	2.785	.030	2.726	2.845
	Suburban	2.646	.040	2.567	2.726
	Urban	2.730	.052	2.629	2.832
School to Work	**Rural**	2.698	.050	2.601	2.796
	Suburban	2.404	.066	2.274	2.534
	Urban	2.582	.085	2.416	2.748

Table 14

Post Hoc Tests of Multiple Comparisons: Tukey HSD

Dependent Variable	Demographic Location		Mean Difference	Std. Error	Sig.
Physical Health	Rural	Suburban	.1391*	.05054	.017
		Urban	.0551	.05995	.629
	Suburban	Rural	-.1391*	.05054	.017
		Urban	-.0840	.06565	.408
	Urban	Rural	-.0551	.05995	.629
		Suburban	.0840	.06565	.408
School to Work	Rural	Suburban	.2943*	.08259	.001
		Urban	.1163	.09798	.462
	Suburban	Rural	-.2943*	.08259	.001
		Urban	-.1780	.10728	.223
	Urban	Rural	-.1163	.09798	.462
		Suburban	.1780	.10728	.223

Note. Based on observed means. *Significant at the .05 level

Table 15

Elementary School Counselors

Dependent Variable	Elementary School Counselor	Mean
Counseling Issues	NO	2.710
	YES	2.800
School to Work	NO	2.864
	YES	2.222

Table 16

Individual ANOVAs for Elementary School Counselors

Source	Dependent Variable	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Elementary School Counselors	Professional Identity	.025	1	.025	.218	.641
	*Counseling Issues	.596	1	.596	5.828	.016
	Relationships	.198	1	.198	1.367	.243
	Physical Health	.465	1	.465	3.128	.078
	Student Achievement	.000	1	.000	.003	.957
	*School to Work	30.747	1	30.747	100.3	$p < .001$

Note. *Significant at the .05 level

Table 17

Individual ANOVAs for Middle School Counselors

Source	Dependent Variable	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Middle School Counselors	*Professional Identity	.640	1	.640	5.63	.018
	*Counseling Issues	.686	1	.686	6.73	.010
	Relationships	.288	1	.288	1.99	.159
	*Physical Health	1.029	1	1.029	7.01	.009
	Student Achievement	.125	1	.125	.864	.353
	School to Work	.002	1	.002	.005	.942

Note. *Significant at the .05 level

Table 18

Middle School Counselors

Dependent Variable	Middle School Counselor	Mean
Professional Identity	NO	2.778
	YES	2.871
Counseling Issues	NO	2.708
	YES	2.804
Physical Health	NO	2.685
	YES	2.803

Table 19

Individual ANOVAs for High School Counselors

Source	Dependent Variable	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
High School Counselors	Professional Identity	.419	1	.419	3.658	.057
	*Counseling Issues	2.029	1	2.029	20.802	$p < .001$
	Relationships	.005	1	.005	.037	.847
	Physical Health	.005	1	.005	.033	.856
	Student Achievement	.165	1	.165	1.140	.287
	*School to Work	42.732	1	42.732	160.01	$p < .001$

Note. *Significant at the .001 level.

Table 20

High School Counselors

Dependent Variable	High School Counselor	Mean
Counseling Issues	NO	2.811
	YES	2.642
School to Work	NO	2.303
	YES	3.079

Table 21

Individual ANOVAs for School Counselor/Student Ratios

Source	Dependent Variable	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
School Counselor-Student ratios	Professional Identity	.065	2	.032	.279	.757
	Counseling Issues	.229	2	.115	1.104	.333
	Relationships	.126	2	.063	.432	.650
	Physical Health	.217	2	.108	.723	.486
	Student Achievement	.089	2	.044	.304	.738
	*School to Work	11.817	2	5.908	15.96	$p < .001$

Note. *Significant at the .05 level.

Table 22

School Counselor/Student Ratios

Dependent Variable	School Counselor/ Student Ratio	Mean
School to Work	350 or less	2.785
	351-500	2.674
	501 or more	2.301

Table 23

School Counselor/Student Ratio Multiple Comparisons

Dependent Variable	School Counselor/ Student Ratio	School Counselor/ Student Ratio	Mean Difference	Std. Error	Sig.
School to Work	350 or less	351-500	.1102	.08563	.403
		501 or more	.4834*	.09189	p < .001
	351-500	350 or less	-.1102	.08563	.403
		501 or more	.3732*	.08278	p < .001
	501 or more	350 or less	-.4834*	.09189	. p < .001
		351-500	-.3732*	.08278	. p < .001

Note. Based on observed means. *Mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

Table 24

Knowledge Base: School to Work (Total Sample)

	Some level of knowledge		No knowledge:Need		No knowledge: No need	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Drop-outs	293	96.1%	8	2.6%	4	1.3%
GED programs/options	268	87.9%	20	6.6%	17	5.6%
Job Training/ Opportunities	267	87.5%	22	7.2%	16	5.2%
Financial Aid	266	87.2%	21	6.9%	18	5.9%
(FAFSA: Free Application for Financial Aid)	270	88.5%	19	6.2%	16	5.2%
Scholarships	261	85.6%	22	7.2%	22	7.2%
Career Development/ Counseling	304	99.7%	1	.3%	0	.0%
Military Options	254	83.3%	28	9.2%	23	7.5%

Table 25

Knowledge Base: School to Work (High School Counselors Only Sample)

	Some level of knowledge		No knowledge:Need	
	Count	%	Count	%
Drop-outs	113	100.0%	0	.0%
GED programs/options	113	100.0%	0	.0%
Job Training/Opportunities	113	100.0%	0	.0%
Financial Aid	112	99.1%	1	.9%
FAFSA: Free Application for Financial Aid	113	100.0%	0	.0%
Scholarships	113	100.0%	0	.0%
Career Development/ Counseling : What is your knowledge level?	113	100.0%	0	.0%
Military Options	112	99.1%	1	.9%

School Counselor Activity Rating Scale (SCARS) Tables.

Table 26

School Counselor Activity Rating Scale Coordination Subscale

Actual	Prefer
A1: Coordinate special events and programs for school	P1:
A2: Coordinate_and_m_GV1	P2:
A3: Inform_parents_a_GV1	P3:
A4: Conduct or coordinate parent education workshops	P4:
A5: Coordinate school counseling program	P5:
A6: Inform parents about the role of the counselor	P6: Inform parents about the role of the counselor
A7: Conduct or coordinate teacher in-service programs	P7: Conduct or coordinate teacher in-service programs
A8: Keep track of how time is spent on activities	P8: Keep track of how time is spent on activities
A9: Attend professional development activities	P9: Attend professional development activities
A10:	P10: Coordinate school counseling advisory team
A11:	P11: Evaluate student progress due to counseling
A12:	P12: Conduct needs assessments and evaluations
A13:	P13: Coordinate orientation process for students

- Missing Answers (9 of 13)
- Completed answers (4 of 13)

Note. Scarborough, J. L. (2005). The School Counselor Activity Rating Scale: An instrument for gathering process data. *Professional School Counseling, 8,* 274-283. Adopted with permission from the author.

Table 27

School Counselor Activity Rating Scale's Means, Standard Deviations, and T-Test Results

Subscale	ACTUAL Mean	ACTUAL Std. Deviation	PREFERRED Mean	PREFERRED Std. Deviation	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Curriculum Subscale	3.4	1.3	3.76	.98	-6.44	304	p < .001
[a]Coordination Subscale	3.0	.83	3.5	.81	-10.72	304	p < .001
Counseling Subscale	3.39	.67	3.89	.57	-14.28	304	p < .001
Consultation Subscale	3.6	.7	3.31	.75	7.5	304	p < .001
[a]Total Score	3.38	.67	3.66	.52	-11.91	304	p < .001
Non-guidance Subscales							
Clerical	3.34	1.65	2.62	1.42	9.21	304	p < .001
Fair Share	3.42	.83	2.72	.76	16.78	304	p < .001
Administrative	1.96	.95	1.37	.64	12.7	304	p < .001
Total Score	3.10	.74	2.4	.67	16.69	304	p < .001

Note. Scarborough, J. L. (2005). The School Counselor Activity Rating Scale: An instrument for gathering process data. *Professional School Counseling, 8,* 274-283. Adopted with permission from the author. [a] Table 39.

Table 28

School Counselor Activity Rating Scale's Non-guidance Subscales' Items: Means and Standard Deviations

Subscale Item	ACTUAL		PREFERRED	
	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.
Clerical				
Enroll and withdraw students	3.25	1.804	2.54	1.551
Schedule students for classes	3.40	1.808	2.81	1.651
Maintain/Complete educational records	3.36	1.772	2.51	1.546
Fair Share				
Organize outreach to families	2.98	1.339	3.39	1.154
Respond to health issues	2.96	1.465	2.18	1.246
Perform hall, bus, cafeteria duty	3.50	1.592	1.81	1.212
Participate on school committees	4.01	.958	3.61	.991
Coordinate standardized testing	3.63	1.599	2.62	1.587
Administrative Subscale				
Substitute teach or cover classes	1.84	1.039	1.31	.706
Handle discipline of students	2.08	1.178	1.43	.848

Table 28, cont.

Note. Scarborough, J. L. (2005). The School Counselor Activity Rating Scale: An instrument for gathering process data. *Professional School Counseling, 8,* 274-283. Adopted with permission from the author.

Table 29

School Counselor Activity Rating Scale's Curriculum Subscale Items: Means and Standard Deviations

Subscale Item	ACTUAL		PREFERRED	
	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.
Classroom lessons to introduce self	4.02	1.189	4.25	.945
Classroom lessons addressing career development	3.51	1.316	3.84	1.074
Classroom lessons on personal and/or social traits	3.58	1.522	3.86	1.144
Classroom lessons on relating to others	3.44	1.578	3.79	1.174
Classroom lessons on personal growth	3.20	1.508	3.69	1.186
Classroom lessons on conflict resolution	3.41	1.550	3.75	1.207
Classroom lessons regarding substance abuse	2.91	1.437	3.37	1.235
Classroom lessons on personal safety issues	3.09	1.536	3.57	1.231

Note. Scarborough, J. L. (2005). The School Counselor Activity Rating Scale: An instrument for gathering process data. *Professional School Counseling, 8,* 274-283. Adopted with permission from the author.

Table 30

School Counselor Activity Rating Scale's Coordination Subscale Items: Means and Standard Deviations

Subscale	ACTUAL		PREFERRED	
Item	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.
Coordinate special events and programs for school	3.60	1.154	[a]	[a]
Conduct or coordinate parent education workshops	2.29	1.166	[a]	[a]
Conduct or coordinate teacher in-service programs	2.33	1.103	2.91	1.125
Coordinate school counseling program	3.95	1.146	[a]	[a]
Inform parents about the role of the counselor	3.12	1.082	[a]	[a]
Coordinate crisis management and intervention	2.28	1.135	[a]	[a]
Inform teachers/admin about the role of counselor	2.90	1.207	3.74	1.043

Note. Scarborough, J. L. (2005). The School Counselor Activity Rating Scale: An instrument for gathering process data. *Professional School Counseling, 8,* 274-283. Adopted with permission from the author. [a]Table 39.

Table 30 continued

Subscale Item	ACTUAL		PREFERRED	
	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.
Keep track of how time is spent on activities	2.86	1.380	3.21	1.338
Attend professional development activities	3.77	1.012	4.12	.884
Coordinate school counseling advisory team	[a]	[a]	3.73	.990
Evaluate student progress due to counseling	[a]	[a]	3.66	1.046
Conduct needs assessments and evaluations	[a]	[a]	3.74	1.043
Coordinate orientation process for students	[a]	[a]	3.74	1.024

Note. Scarborough, J. L. (2005). The School Counselor Activity Rating Scale: An instrument for gathering process data. *Professional School Counseling, 8,* 274-283. Adopted with permission from the author. [a]Table 39.

Table 31

School Counselor Activity Rating Scale's Counseling Subscale Items: Means and Standard Deviations

Subscale Item	ACTUAL		PREFERRED	
	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.
Counsel students regarding personal/family issues	4.19	.834	4.32	.771
Counsel students regarding school behavior	4.15	.863	3.95	.965
Counsel students regarding crisis issues	3.49	.918	3.64	1.051
Counsel students regarding relationships	4.07	.912	4.08	.876
Small groups addressing relationships/social skills	2.81	1.192	3.81	.941
Small group counseling regarding academic issues	2.62	1.112	3.71	.922
Small groups regarding family/personal issues	2.54	1.208	3.73	1.030
Small groups regarding substance abuse issues	1.93	1.024	3.06	1.132
Follow up with counseling participants	3.89	1.075	4.41	.747
*Item that did not load on a factor				
Counsel students with academic issues	4.17	.879	4.19	.837

Table 31, continued

Note. Scarborough, J. L. (2005). The School Counselor Activity Rating Scale: An instrument for gathering process data. *Professional School Counseling, 8,* 274-283. Adopted with permission from the author.

Table 32

School Counselor Activity Rating Scale's Consultation Subscale Items: Means and Standard Deviations

Subscale Item	ACTUAL		PREFERRED	
	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.
Coordinate referrals for students to other agencies	3.16	1.016	3.51	1.033
Consult with school staff regarding student behavior	4.17	.850	4.14	.866
Consult with parents regarding child development	3.29	.936	3.82	.920
Consult with agencies concerning students	3.14	.980	3.67	.962
Assist in identifying exceptional children	2.90	1.247	2.93	1.168
Participate in team/grade level meetings	3.11	1.327	3.46	1.106
Provide consultation for administrators	3.39	1.122	3.69	1.025

Note. Scarborough, J. L. (2005). The School Counselor Activity Rating Scale: An instrument for gathering process data. *Professional School Counseling, 8,* 274-283. Adopted with permission from the author.

Table 33

Reliability of School Counselor Activity Rating Subscales: Cronbach's Alpha

Subscale	Actual	Preferred
Curriculum Subscale	.964	.947
[a]Coordination Subscale	.661	.702
Counseling Subscale	.856	.808
Consultation Subscale	.811	.825
Non-guidance Subscales		
Clerical	.911	.875
Fair Share	.527	.564
Administrative	.621	.645

Note. Scarborough, J. L. (2005). The School Counselor Activity Rating Scale: An instrument for gathering process data. *Professional School Counseling, 8,* 274-283. Adopted with permission from the author. [a] Table 39.

VITA

Laura Hebert was born on February 20, 1966 and raised in Knoxville, Tennessee. Laura started her college education at the University of Tennessee in 1984. In 1987, Laura enlisted in the military and started a family within the next few years. Laura returned to her education full time after serving in the Persian Gulf War.

Laura received her B.A. in Academic Psychology in 1993. She continued her education at the University of Tennessee and obtained her M.S. in Community Counseling with an emphasis in marriage and family in 1995. Laura worked as a therapist for Child and Family Services and also taught parenting classes.

In 1994, she began working as a career counselor for the University of Tennessee TRIO programs. While working at UTK, Laura obtained an Ed.S. in school counseling in 2000. Since 2000, Laura has worked as a school counselor in a primary school in Sevier County. In 2003, she began working on her doctoral studies in Counselor Education with an emphasis in Family Studies and School Counseling. She continues to work full time as a school counselor.

Currently, Laura lives in Strawberry Plains, Tennessee, with her two daughters, Season and Savannah. She is the leader of a Girl Scout troop, plays volleyball, and collects bugs for artwork.